





Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



3 1924 092 885 981



THE LIFE
OF
NATHANAEL GREENE,

MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE ARMY OF THE REVOLUTION.

BY
GEORGE WASHINGTON GREENE,

AUTHOR OF "HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION," "HISTORICAL STUDIES," ETC.

"Ως φάσαν, οἵ μιν ἴδοντο πονεύμενον· οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγε
"Ηντησ' οὐδὲ ἴδον· περὶ δ' ἄλλων φασὶ γενέσθαι.
ILIAID, IV. 374.

"After this manner said they, who had seen him toiling; but I ne'er
Met him myself, nor saw him: men say he was greater than others."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK
PUBLISHED BY HURD AND HOUGHTON.
Cambridge: Riverside Press.

1871.

Y

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1867, by

ANNA M. GREENE,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of New York.

TO

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

MY DEAR LONGFELLOW,

THIRTY-NINE years ago this month of April, you and I were together at Naples, wandering up and down amid the wonders of that historical city, and, consciously in some things and unconsciously in others, laying up those precious associations which are youth's best preparation for age. We were young then, with life all before us; and, in the midst of the records of a great past, our thoughts would still turn to our own future. Yet, even in looking forward, they caught the coloring of that past, making things bright to our eyes, which, from a purely American point of view, would have worn a different aspect. From then till now the spell of those days has been upon us.

One day—I shall never forget it—we returned

at sunset from a long afternoon amid the statues and relics of the Museo Borbonico. Evening was coming on with a sweet promise of the stars; and our minds and hearts were so full that we could not think of shutting ourselves up in our rooms, or of mingling with the crowd on the Toledo. We wanted to be alone, and yet to feel that there was life all around us. We went up to the flat roof of the house, where, as we walked, we could look down into the crowded street, and out upon the wonderful bay, and across the bay to Ischia and Capri and Sorrento, and over the house-tops and villas and vineyards to Vesuvius. The ominous pillar of smoke hung suspended above the fatal mountain, reminding us of Pliny, its first and noblest victim. A golden vapor crowned the bold promontory of Sorrento, and we thought of Tasso. Capri was calmly sleeping, like a sea-bird upon the waters; and we seemed to hear the voice of Tacitus from across the gulf of eighteen centuries, telling us that the historian's pen is still powerful to absolve or to condemn long after the imperial sceptre has fallen from the withered hand. There, too, lay the native island of him whose daring mind conceived the fearful vengeance of the Sicilian Vespers. We did not yet know Niccolini; but his grand

verses had already begun their work of regeneration in the Italian heart. Virgil's tomb was not far off. The spot consecrated by Sannazaro's ashes was near us. And over all, with a thrill like that of solemn music, fell the splendor of the Italian sunset.

We talked and mused by turns, till the twilight deepened and the stars came forth to mingle their mysterious influences with the overmastering magic of the scene. It was then that you unfolded to me your plans of life, and showed me from what "deep cisterns" you had already learned to draw. From that day the office of literature took a new place in my thoughts. I felt its forming power as I had never felt it before, and began to look with a calm resignation upon its trials, and with true appreciation upon its rewards. Thenceforth, little as I have done of what I wished to do, literature has been the inspiration, the guide, and the comfort of my life. And now, in giving to the world the first, perhaps the only, work for which I dare hope a life beyond my own, the memory of those days comes back to me, and tells me that, loving me still in the fulness of your fame as you loved me in the hour of aspiration, you will not be unwilling to see your name united with mine

upon these pages, which but for your counsel
and your sympathy would never have been
written.

Ever, my dear Longfellow,

Faithfully and affectionately yours,

GEORGE WASHINGTON GREENE.

EAST GREENWICH, R. I., April 3, 1867.

P R E F A C E.

THE intention of writing this work was formed in early youth, and has been kept constantly in view through the checkered fortunes of maturer years. The plan has often changed under the influence of a wider study of books, and a more extensive observation of men. The purpose has never lost the hold which it first took upon my youthful imagination.

I was born and grew up in the midst of men and women who had known my grandfather as a public and a private man, and seen him in all the various relations of life. In my seventeenth year I became the inmate of the house of one of his dearest friends, General Lafayette. Among all who had known him I found but one opinion both of his greatness and his goodness, of the vigor and depth of his mind, of the warmth and purity of his heart.

In 1846 I wrote, at the request of Mr. Sparks, the Life which forms the tenth volume of the second series of his American Biography. I wrote it at Rome, from the common printed authorities, and, as I expressly stated, not as the result of my studies, but as an earnest of what I some day hoped to do with Greene's letters before me. On my return to the United States I received from my cousin, Phineas Miller Nightingale (second son of General Greene's eldest daughter, Martha Washington) the family papers which had passed into his hands, and began a careful study

of my subject in these authentic documents. Every page that I read confirmed my original opinion, and strengthened my first intention. I resolved that nothing should prevent me from telling the full story of my grandfather's life, and claiming for him the gratitude which is his due from all generations of his countrymen.

The life of General Greene falls by a natural division into two parts; the first of which is strictly biographical, the second historical. In the first, his position is that of a subordinate officer, who, whatever influence he may exert, is never the acknowledged source of controlling movements. Events do not revolve around him as their common centre. His actions are parts of the actions of other men. However just his views, he cannot enforce them without the consent of an official superior. However well done all that he does may be, the narrative of it, if confined to that alone, would leave half of the story untold. Such was Greene's public life, from 1775 to his appointment to the command of the Southern army in October, 1780.

From that moment his life becomes history, — the history of the Carolinas and Georgia. Military movements originate with him. The restoration of civil government depends upon the success of his arms. The resources of the country are drawn forth and administered by his will. If you would understand events, you must seek the explanation of them in his letters and reports. Battles and sieges and marches are parts of the general plan which he conceived, and dependent for their historical importance upon the measure in which they contributed to the accomplishment of that plan. This fundamental difference

of character requires a corresponding difference of treatment.

Therefore, in the first part of this work Greene's thoughts and feelings, the growth of his mind and the formation of his character, compose the picture. The war is the frame in which it is set. Of him I have told all that I could learn; of the war, only so much as was necessary in order to understand the part which he took therein. Of the story of these five years Washington is the representative hero. The other generals are grouped around him in due subordination. First and nearest to him of all stands Greene, with Washington's "great arm leaning upon him." No one will read these volumes of mine who has not already made himself familiar with the general history of the war, either in the careful pages of Sparks or the charming narrative of Irving. No American can feel that he has done his duty to himself or his country who has not read both.

In my first two volumes I have drawn freely from General Greene's correspondence, inserting many letters entire, and giving copious extracts from others. But while I have still made this correspondence the basis of my third volume also, I have used it rather as the material from which my narrative was to be woven than as a narrative in itself. The psychological study was already complete. The character of the General was already formed before he took the command of the Southern army, as the character of the man was formed before he took command of the Rhode Island army of observation. From what he had already done it was easy to conjecture what he would do. Every report of a new step in the reconquest of the South came to Washington not merely

as welcome tidings, but as a fulfilment of expectations. “I think I am sending you a general,” he had written, when he announced Greene’s appointment to a Southern correspondent. “This brilliant manœuvre is another proof of the singular abilities which that officer possesses,” he wrote, when the “report of the judicious and successful movement of General Greene, by which he compelled the enemy to abandon their outposts,”* reached him. Therefore, while Greene is kept almost exclusively in view through the first two volumes, in the third other characters are brought prominently forward, who hold somewhat of the same relation to him which he held to Washington. The canvas is more crowded, and he, in turn, becomes the central figure of a noble group.

I trust that I shall not be suspected of indulging a puerile vanity, if I claim for Greene’s family a different position from that which has been assigned them by previous historians. To my conception of personal dignity, it is a matter of absolute indifference whether General Greene’s ancestors were men of fortune or day-laborers; whether his father aided the work of his brain by the work of his hands, or passed his life in guiding and controlling the work of other men. But, as a historical fact, I have thought it my duty to say, that, from the first emigrant downward, the Greenes filled prominent and important positions in public life; that the branch from which the General sprang was early engaged in manufactures and farming, upon a scale which implies the command of what must, in those days, have been a large capital; and that the General’s father devoted the chief

* *Sparks’s Washington*, Vol. VIII. p. 241.

of his time to the utilization of that capital. In colonial life there is no room for idle men or women, and habits of industry and thrift were laid deep in the foundations of the Colony of Rhode Island. It was no especial merit of the Greenes that their industry had been fruitful, but it would have deprived them of all claim to the respect of their contemporaries, if, while all around them labored, they alone had been idle. In a country so full of life and future as ours, where the merit of the father is a pledge instead of an inheritance, and events and actors follow each other with such rapidity that the link between the present and the past seems constantly to be slipping from our grasp, family pride has but a thin and barren soil to grow in. But while blood carries with it no privilege, and to be the grandson of a great man conveys no share in his greatness, there are obligations independent of privilege, and a duty to country and to the truth of history, obedience to which is often mistaken by the thoughtless for vanity or pride. Here and elsewhere I claim for General Greene the place which his contemporaries gave him. I claim it upon the authority of his written words, and of his acts as recorded by those who saw and shared in them. The nature of historical evidence must change before his position can be changed.

In using the manuscript letters from which so large a part of my work is drawn, I have not allowed myself to make any alterations either in grammar or phraseology. General Greene habitually uses "is" for "are," and occasionally makes other mistakes, which a stroke of the pen would correct. I have not felt at liberty to attribute to him

a grammatical accuracy which he did not possess, or to give to his letters the false coloring of strict propriety of construction. His language is generally good, his sentences clear, his expression forcible. But the habits of early life were too strong in minor details for the associations of later life; and, admirable as his letters are in the higher qualities of composition,—thought distinctly, precisely, and vigorously expressed,—they still betray the deficiencies of his education. In the orthography, though generally correct, I have not hesitated to follow the modern standard.

Besides the papers of General Greene, which of themselves form a collection of over six thousand documents, I have made free use of the Washington papers in the Department of State at Washington; of the Gates and Steuben papers in the library of the Historical Society of New York; of the Heath papers in the library of the Historical Society of Massachusetts; of some very important papers in the library of the Philosophical Society of Pennsylvania; and have had copies from the Sullivan, Reed, Lincoln, Pickering, Glover, Varnum, and Wadsworth papers, through the courtesy of their owners. Among the printed authorities, I have placed great confidence in Gordon, whose letters to the principal actors in the war show how carefully he performed the historian's first duty,—the search of truth. Of the American Archives it is needless to speak, except to express the regret which not only every student of American history, but every American honorably jealous for the good name of his country, must feel that the hands of such a man as Peter Force should have been arbitrarily stayed in a work worthy of the industry

of a Muratori, and the critical acumen of a Gibbon. Mr. Sparks's "Washington," and "Correspondence of the Revolution," I have used with constantly increasing respect for the good sense and conscientious love of truth which were leading characteristics of that excellent man. I have also, among modern authorities, consulted with great advantage "The Battles of the United States, by H. B. Dawson," whose habits of minute reference cannot be too highly commended.

The public acknowledgment of the kind offices upon which works like this are so largely dependent is one of the pleasantest duties of the historian. My thanks are especially due to my cousin, Phineas Miller Nightingale, of Cumberland Island, Georgia, for efficient aid in the collection of materials; to my lifelong friend, William H. Richards of New York, for assistance in the laborious task of arranging them; and to my cousin, Lieutenant-Governor William Greene, of Warwick, R. I., for important papers, and still more important counsel. During my visits to Washington I was allowed by my venerable friend, Peter Force, free access to his library, the most valuable in existence in this department of study; and what no library could have afforded,—a free communication of the treasures of tradition and anecdote with which he had stored his memory in the course of a life devoted to the illustration of American history. I have already spoken of what I owe to the publications of Mr. Sparks. I owe still more to the deep interest which he took in my labors,—an interest beginning when they began, and ending only with his life.

To George H. Moore, Friedrich Kapp, William B. Reed, Charles F. Adams, Henry B. Dawson, Thomas C. Am-

ory, George Brinley, Benjamin Lincoln, Charles Deane, Richard R. Ward, Peyton Skipwyth, Robert H. Ives, John S. Littell, Octavius Pickering, Henry E. Turner, James H. Eldredge, Daniel H. Greene, Townsend Ward, and the family of the late Thomas Biddle of Philadelphia, I am under great obligations,—to some of them for copies of documents, to some for the loan of books, and to some for aid in the investigation of particular questions. A part of my long labors was cheered by the active sympathy of my kinsman, Samuel Ward Greene. Nor can I ever forget the assistance given me by my friends, Charles Sumner, Charles Butler, and James S. Thayer in my endeavors to obtain the aid of Congress for the publication of General Greene's correspondence,—an assistance none the less prized for the failure of the object for which it was given. To each and all of these gentlemen I would tender my sincere thanks. Alas that those thanks can no longer reach the ear of another friend,—George Sumner,—whose wise counsels and affectionate zeal cheered and strengthened the first years of my labors, but whom death has not permitted to see their close.

It is not without many doubts and misgivings that I part from these companions of laborious years. It is impossible to write words so akin to farewell and not feel a sadness steal over you, like the sadness of him who pauses upon the threshold and looks behind him through eyes dimmed by tears, before he turns his face from the familiar home-stead forever. In sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, in my native land, with its present crowding relentlessly upon the past; under foreign skies, where the past still controls and gives its own coloring to the pres-

ent,—I have ever cherished the hope of telling this story of the life of an American of the heroic age of American history. And, now that my task is done and these pages pass from under my control, stronger than every personal feeling is the fear that, through some error or shortcoming of my own, I may have failed to do justice to a great and good man, and incurred thereby the guilt of dimming one of the brightest pages of the annals of my country. If I have failed, it has not been from want of industry to search for the truth, nor of courage to tell it. As my documents have dictated, so have I written. My errors—and in every history there will be errors—are the offspring of involuntary ignorance or unconscious misconstruction. Whoever will point them out to me will do me an office of friendship which I shall be the first to acknowledge, and the last to forget.

G. W. G.

EAST GREENWICH, R. I., October 21, 1867.

CONTENTS.

BOOK FIRST.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS COMMANDER OF
THE RHODE ISLAND ARMY OF OBSERVATION.

1742-1775..

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Potowomut.—John Greene.—Birth of Nathanael Greene.— The Quaker Preacher and his Family.—Habits and Customs of the Times.—Anecdotes of Nathanael Greene.—Quaker Views of Literature.—Nathanael's First Studies.—Giles and the Holiday Walk.—East Greenwich.—Master Maxwell.— New Studies.—The Winter-Evening Fireside.—The Eight Sons.—Colonial Traditions.—Pocket Money.—The Sail to Newport.—Buying Books.—Dr. Stiles.	3

CHAPTER II.

Greene's Studies.—New Acquaintances.—Lindley Murray.— Visit to New York.—John Jay.—Inoculation.—Family Lawsuit.—Greene reads Law Books.—Growth of Mind.— Personal Appearance.—Manners and Habits.	21
--	----

CHAPTER III.

Potowomut.—The Farm.—The Forge and Mills.—Coventry. —Whence the Iron for the Forge came.—From Potowomut to Coventry.—The New House.—Greene among his Neigh- bors.—David Howell.	29
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

Death of Greene's Father.—Greene a Voter.—First Steps in Public Life.—First Political Letter.—In the Assembly.— Gasper.—Takes his Stand.—William Greene of Warwick. —Henry Marchant.—Progress of the Revolution.—Greene's	
--	--

Opinion of Governor Ward as Delegate to Congress. — Militia Laws Revised. — Kentish Guards. — James M. Varnum. — Christopher Greene. — Letter to Varnum. — Trip to Boston to buy a Musket.	39
--	----

CHAPTER V.

Inner Life. — Mental Culture. — How and what he studied. — His Library. — Study of Composition. — Letters to S. Ward, Jr. — Quaker Prejudices against Literature. — Glimpses of his Daily Life and Habits. — Forge burned. — A Lottery. — Letter to William Greene. — Asthma. — In Love. — Why he loved S. Ward. — S. Ward's Sister. — Progress of the Dispute with England. — Greene resolves to take up Arms. — Read out of the Meeting. — Threatened Accusation. — Military Reading. — Rhode Island College. — Courtship and Marriage. — Domestic Life. — Rapid Development of Public Opinion. — Tea burned in Market Square, Providence. — Battle of Lexington. — March of Kentish Guards. — Assembly meets. — Army of Observation. — Mission to Connecticut. — Greene chosen Brigadier-General. — Commission. — Farewell Letter to his Wife.	52
---	----



BOOK SECOND.

FROM HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE COMMAND OF THE RHODE ISLAND ARMY OF OBSERVATION TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL.

1775-1778.

CHAPTER I.

New Phase in Greene's Life. — Condition of Rhode Island Camp. — Effects of his Presence. — Council of War at Cambridge. — Ward's Head-quarters. — Colonial Troops independent of each other. — Greene devotes himself to disciplining his Brigade. — Difficulties of the Task. — Drunkenness. — Punishments. — Hard Work. — Treated with "Great Respect" by the General Officers. — Bunker Hill. — Active Siege. — Dishonest Agents. — Arrival of Washington. — Charles Lee. — Greene sends an Address to Washington. — His Satisfaction at Washington's Appointment.	87
---	----

CONTENTS.

• xix

CHAPTER II.

Washington's Arrival the Beginning of a New Period.—His Staff.—Mifflin.—Trumbull.—Reed.—Gates.—Army of the United Colonies.—New Organization.—Three Grand Divisions.—Greene on Prospect Hill.—Gradual Extension of the Works.—Death of Adjutant Mumford.—All Eyes fixed on Boston.—Parties to Camp.—The Country calls for a Battle.—Want of Powder.—Waste of Powder.—Preparations for Defence.—Extracts from General Orders.

CHAPTER III.

Term of Service of the Army most out. — Congress sends a Committee to Camp. — Greene's Impressions of Franklin. — His first Intercourse with Southern Members of Congress. — His Efforts to do away with Sectional Jealousies. — Lord Sheffield. — Church's Treason. — Gradual Growth of a Desire for Independence. — Extracts from Greene's Letters to Governor Ward. — His Idea of the Duty of Congress. — An Army of Seventy Thousand Men. — Feelings of the People. . . . 116

CHAPTER IV.

Greene's Life, Habits, and Associates in Camp. — Letter to his Wife. — Christopher Greene and Samuel Ward join the Canada Expedition. — Interest awakened by it. — Anxiety caused by the Burning of Falmouth. — By the Progress of Enlistment. — Extracts from Letters. — Opinion on giving Bounties. — Mistake of Congress. — Old Troops go. — New Troops come. — Arms retained. — New Year. — The Flag. — Scanty Supplies. — Small-Pox. — Mrs. Greene in Camp. — Siege draws to a Close. — Dorchester Heights occupied. — Preparations for an Attack. — Storm. — Evacuation of Boston. 130

CHAPTER V.

Perplexing Conduct of the Enemy. — Fortifications of Boston. — Greene in Command of the City. — Letter to Colonel Nightingale. — Thursday Lecture. — Marching Orders. — Alarm in Rhode Island. — March to New York. — Preparations for Defending the City. — Greene appointed to command Fourth Brigade. — Command on Long Island. — For-

tifications. — Alarm Signals. — Tories. — John Jay. — Gouverneur Morris. — Reconnoitring with Knox. — Forts Washington and Independence. — Brigade and Regimental Regiments.	149
--	-----

C H A P T E R VI.

Death of Governor Ward. — Correspondence with John Adams. — Tone and Character of it. — The new Army. — Difficulties in Raising and Organizing it. — Provisions for the Disabled. — Condition of the Officers. — Principles of Promotion. — Insufficient Pay of Soldiers and Officers. — Exaggerated Ideas of the Strength of the Army. — Rhode Island Declaration of Independence. — Letters to Washington. — Alexander Hamilton. — Mrs. Greene at Camp.	170
---	-----

C H A P T E R VII.

Enemy's Ships begin to arrive at the Hook. — Constant Watching. — Alarms in the Country. — Tories. — Threatened Duel in Greene's Division. — English Fleet at the Narrows. — Arrival of the Hessians. — Hitchcock's Regiment. — Militia. — First Marching Orders. — Removal of Cattle and Grain. — Dangerous Illness. — Carried to New York. — Battle of Long Island.	195
---	-----

C H A P T E R VIII.

Condition of the Army after the Battle of Long Island. — Greene convalescent. — Letter to Washington. — Council of War. — Unfortunate Decision. — Greene urges the Call of a New Council. — Decision reversed. — Retreat from New York. — Battle of Harlem. — Greene in Command in the Jerseys. — What was thought of him. — His Idea of what should be done. — Preparations for Defence. — His Opinion of Congress. — Letters to Governor Cooke. — Resolves of Congress. — Public Opinion. — Privateering. — Hospitals. — Recommendation of Officers for the New Army. — Charles Lee.	208
--	-----

C H A P T E R IX.

Howe in Motion. — Greene to Washington. — Expedition to Staten Island. — Called to Council at Head-quarters. — Let-

ters, and Extracts from Letters.—Foreshadowings of the Quartermaster-General.—Greene's Troops.—The Passage of the Hudson.—Letters to Congress and General Mifflin.	234
--	-----

CHAPTER X.

Letters to Washington.—Barracks at Fort Independence burnt.—Letters to Washington.—Letter to Mrs. Greene—John Clark to General Greene.—The Group at Fort Lee.—Harrison to Greene.	247
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

Movements of the Enemy.—Magaw on the Alert.—Greene to Washington.—Harrison to Greene.—Washington to Greene.—Greene to Washington.—Preparations for Defence.—Letters to and from Greene.—Washington at Fort Lee.—Fall of Fort Washington.	260
--	-----

CHAPTER XII.

Fall of Fort Lee.—Different Accounts of it.—Retreat through the Jerseys.—Greene's Hopes.—Letters.—Inefficiency of Congress.—Embarrassments of Washington's Position.—Ampler Powers conferred on Washington.—Greene to Governor Cooke.	276
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

Washington's Confidence in Greene excites Jealousy.—Charles Lee.—Greene's Share in the Jersey Campaign.—Surprise of Trenton.—Letters.—Greene in Favor of following up the Surprise.—The Assanpink.—Princeton.—March to Morristown.	296
--	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

Effect of Success on the Country and the Army.—Position of the Army.—Recreations of Winter Quarters.—Washington's Anxiety.—Greene shares it.—State Rights.—Death of Colonel Hitchcock.—Greene's Regret for the Loss of Mercer.—Greene in want of a Horse.—Expects Active Work.—Difficulties in Raising the New Army.—Correspondence with Governor Cooke.—Defends Washington.—Letters and Ex-
--

tracts.—Change Produced on the Character of the War by the Declaration of Independence.—Bounties.—Inoculation.—Delays caused by a Weak Government.	308
--	-----

C H A P T E R X V.

Improved State of Public Feeling.—Successful Expeditions and their Effect.—Hamilton's Entrance into Washington's Family.—Correspondence with John Adams resumed.—Washington's Opinion of the Policy of Congress in the Case of General Lee.—Growth of Hostility in Congress towards Washington.—Greene sent to Philadelphia.—Appears before Congress.—Committee appointed to confer with him.—Letters.—Life in Philadelphia.—Returns to Camp.	331
---	-----

C H A P T E R X VI.

Greene's Return to Camp.—Birth of his Second Daughter.—Governor Livingston's Family.—Letter to Mrs. Greene.—Anxiety about Rhode Island.—Correspondence with Arnold.—Spring.—Army not yet raised.—Letter to J. Adams.—Doubts and Conjectures about the Enemy's Plans.—Attempt to surprise General Lincoln.—American Retaliation.—Plans, Positions, Reports, and Conjectures.—Greene sent with Knox to examine the Passes of the Hudson.—Reports and Letters to Washington.—Return to Morristown.—Letters to his Wife.	355
--	-----

C H A P T E R X VII.

Scanty Numbers of the New Army.—Greene's Division.—Weedon.—Muhlenberg.—Exchanges a Regiment with Sullivan.—New Aid.—Washington's Position.—Howe's Plan.—Lee's Treason.—Conjectures and Perplexity of the Americans.—Preparations for the Campaign.—Howe's Manœuvres.—Americans Advance on Brunswick.—Howe foiled.—Disasters in the North.—Greene expects to be sent North.—Washington unwilling to part with him.—Veil partly lifted.—March to the Delaware.	380
--	-----

C H A P T E R X VIII.

Greene, Sullivan, and Knox on the Point of resigning.—Their Conduct misrepresented.—Defects of the Civil Government

of the Revolution. — Change in the Relations between Congress and the Country. — Relations of Congress to the State Governments. — To the Army. — Opposition and Collisions. — Question of Promotion. — Letters to John Adams. — Foreign Officers. — Du Coudray. — Conditional Tender of Resignation. — Congress very angry. — Resolutions. — Interruption of Greene's Correspondence with John Adams. — Letter to President of Congress.	402
---	-----

C H A P T E R X I X.

American Army on the Banks of the Delaware. — Perplexed by Howe's Movements. — Different Opinions about them. — Uneasiness caused by the Evacuation of Ticonderoga. — Glimpse of Inner Life. — Schuyler and New England Officers. — Letters and Extracts. — Council of War. — Lafayette. — Army on the Point of Moving Northward. — Howe in Chesapeake Bay. — American Army marches Southward. — March through Philadelphia. — Washington Reconnoitring. — Camp at Red Clay Creek. — Greene condemns the Position. — Henry Lee. — Army at Chad's Ford. — Battle of the Brandywine.	428
--	-----

C H A P T E R X X.

American Army not discouraged by their Defeat. — March to Germantown. — Sullivan unjustly blamed. — Weedon dissatisfied. — Greene and Washington. — Preparations for advancing towards the Enemy. — Advance to Warren's Tavern. — Battle prevented by a Storm. — Greene's Choice of a Position. — Marches and Countermarches. — Howe deceives the Americans, and crosses the Schuylkill.	454
--	-----

C H A P T E R X X I.

Howe in Philadelphia. — Straitened for Provisions. — Washington's Preparations for the Defence of the Delaware. — Council of War oppose a Battle. — Further Intelligence. — Battle decided upon. — Advance of the Army and Battle of Germantown.	470
--	-----

C H A P T E R X X I I.

Beginning of the Cabal against Washington. — Forts on the Delaware. — Christopher Greene. — Operations on both Sides
--

of the Delaware.—Attack of Red Bank.—Defeat and Death of Donop.—Rejoicings of the Americans.—Colonel Greene thanked by Congress and congratulated by Washington and General Greene.—Washington anxious to attack the British.—Movements for the Support of Fort Mifflin.—Attack and Fall of Fort Mifflin.	482
---	-----

C H A P T E R X X I I .

Howe resolved to have the Left Bank of the Delaware.—Cornwallis sent to secure it.—Greene sent to oppose him.—Reasons for disliking the Service.—Conway's Letter to Gates.—Ought Red Bank to be held?—Greene on the March.—Letter to his Wife.—Crosses the Delaware.—Letter to Varnum.—To Washington.—Fort Mercer evacuated.—Greene's Prospects not bright.—Glover's Brigade.—Colonel Comstock.—Council at Head-quarters on attacking Philadelphia.—Letters to and from Washington.—Greene rejoins the main Army.—Contemporary Opinion of his Conduct.—Marshall's Opinion.	510
--	-----

C H A P T E R X X I V .

Winter March to Valley Forge.—The Valley.—Hut Building.—The Encampment.—Position condemned by De Kalb and Varnum.—Alarm from the Enemy.—Distress of the Army for Food.—Letters.—Discontent.—Congressional Committee.—Greene sent to collect Supplies.—Letters to Washington.	536
--	-----

C H A P T E R X X V .

Momentary Relief of the Army.—Greene's daily Duties.—Social Life in Camp.—Lafayette, Steuben, Duponceau, De Kalb, Fleury, &c.—Appearance of the Encampment.—What Men talked about.—Rhode Island's Negro Regiment.—Steuben's Arrival and first Steps in Disciplining the Army.	564
---	-----

LIFE OF NATHANAEL GREENE.



BOOK FIRST.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS COMMANDER OF THE RHODE ISLAND ARMY OF OBSERVATION.

1742 - 1775.

BOOK FIRST.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS COMMANDER
OF THE RHODE ISLAND ARMY OF OBSERVATION.

1742 - 1775.



CHAPTER I.

Potowomut. — John Greene. — Birth of Nathanael Greene. — The Quaker Preacher and his Family. — Habits and Customs of the Times. — Anecdotes of Nathanael Greene. — Quaker Views of Literature. — Nathanael's First Studies. — Giles and the Holiday Walk. — East Greenwich. — Master Maxwell. — New Studies. — The Winter-Evening Fireside. — The Eight Sons. — Colonial Traditions. — Pocket Money. — The Sail to Newport. — Buying Books. — Dr. Stiles.

ON the western shore of Narraganset Bay, and midway almost between the northern and southern extremities of the State of Rhode Island, lies a tract of land still known by its Indian name of Potowomut, or place of all the fires.¹ It is a peninsula of unequal width, though about two miles wide in its broadest part, and bounded on the south by a fresh-water river, navigable for small craft for about two miles from its mouth, and called, like the land on its left bank, by its original name of Potowomut. At the head of navigation of this little stream, and where it ceases to feel the influence of the tide from the

¹ Works of Job Durfee, p. 162.

bay, the smaller streamlets that form it are gathered into a pond,—once, apparently, a mere hollow between two small hills, in which part of the water remained while part made its way over the lower rim of the valley to the channel of the river. The banks of these smaller streams are still covered with brushwood and trees. There are trees on the eastern bank of the pond also,—oaks for the most part, and, though not thick set, yet enough so to show that the whole tract must have been well wooded in 1654, when Randal Houlden and Ezekiel Hollyman bought it for themselves and their fellow-townsmen of Warwick, of Tacomanan and his sons Awashotust and Wawanockashaw, for fifteen pounds in wampumpeage and “ye vallue of one coate of such clothe as ye Indians doe now commonly use to weare, annually as a gratuity.”¹

One of these inhabitants of Warwick was John Greene, surgeon, a native of Salisbury in England, who, coming over “in the next company after Roger Williams,”² with his wife and five children, had followed Williams to Providence and Gorton to Shawomet, thus becoming an original proprietor in both places. The purchase of Potowomut had brought it within the jurisdiction of Warwick, although separated from it by the full width of Shawomet or Greenwich Bay; and here,

¹ Bartlett, *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, Vol. I. p. 131, note. Family, compiled by General Greene, I am told by a member of the family, though the indorsement says by General Greene's father.

² MS. Genealogy of the Greene

in the old homestead, Nathanael Greene, fifth in descent from the original emigrant, "was born the twenty-seventh day of fifth month, 1742, about one or two o'clock in the afternoon of the third day of the week."¹ His father, Nathanael, the second of that name in the family, was a Quaker preacher, eminent, tradition says, for his vigorous enforcement of evangelical truth, but equally well known among his neighbors as a large landed proprietor, and the owner of a grist-mill, a flour-mill, a saw-mill, and a forge, which he kept in constant and profitable operation. Eight sons, two of them by his first wife, Phoebe Greene, the other six by his second wife, Mary Mott, were trained from their boyhood to work in the fields, the mills, and the forge; to walk their two miles to the meeting-house in all weathers; and having learnt to read in George Fox's "Instructions for right Spelling and plain Directions for Reading and Writing true English,"² and mastered the curious collection of miscellaneous information which it contains, were expected to find ample food for their literary curiosity during the rest of their lives in the "Holy Scriptures, Barclay's Apology, Fox, Townsend, and a few others of the same tenor and date."³

The habits of the country were primitively sim-

¹ Greene, Gen. *ut sup.* As the new style is mentioned in one of the later entries this must have been O. S., and consequently the 6th of June.

² I am indebted for my knowledge

of this curious little volume to my friend Charles Deane, Esq., of Cambridge, Mass.

³ General Greene's own words in a letter to S. Ward, Jr., Oct. 9, 1772.

ple, those of the Quakers rigorously so. Carriages were little used, the father of a family riding to meeting with his wife on a pillion behind him, and sometimes with a younger child on a cushion before ; the rest of the family, servants and all, following after on foot. It was a proof that Nathanael Greene was well to do in the world that he was the owner of a chair. The boys would work hard all day, and walk half a dozen miles for a visit or a frolic in the evening. The table was abundantly supplied with nutritious food, meat forming a part of every meal, and cider from their own orchards being the principal drink. By the rules of the Quakers every boy was trained to some handicraft, and by the habits of the country all worked with their own hands. But thrift was also a habit of the country, and the foundations of that industrial prosperity which has won for Rhode Island so high a place among her sister States were already laid in the laborious habits and judicious enterprise of her Colonial days.

As the largest town contained but little over five thousand inhabitants, there was no very material difference between town and country life. The meetings of the General Assembly, and sessions of the court, which were held alternately in the principal towns, were the great civil gatherings of the people. And as the day for them approached, inn-keepers were seen bustling about with an air of busy importance ;—the larder was stocked anew, the huge oven filled to overflowing with apple-pies

and pumpkin-pies, the cider-barrel tapped and tasted ; the old drudge-horse wearied with journeys to the mills for the rye and Indian meal that were to furnish the morning and evening board with the oblong johnny-cake and the cone-shaped brown bread, and the dinner-table with the luscious suet-pudding and the spherical dumpling, that borrowed such a flavor from the rich meat gravy. Bedroom windows were opened, and the long unused bed aired. All along the highways and cross-paths from the neighboring towns and villages, you would see travellers journeying resolutely forward through rain or dust, some on foot, some on horseback, some alone, some gathered in friendly groups. The man with "a case in court" was readily known by his half important, half anxious air ; the idler, by his story and jest ; and between those who came for business and those who came for curiosity, the quiet streets would buzz and hum with life.

For the Quakers, the great gathering times were the yearly, quarterly, and monthly meetings, when every Quaker door was thrown open, and every seat at table and in the meeting-house filled. Nathanael Greene's house, family tradition tells us, was always well filled on these occasions, and the good cheer that he set before his guests seasoned with good counsel to the young, and pleasant interchange of thought and experience with the old. Tradition adds, too, that there were moments when the grave Quaker brow relaxed, and a merry jest or tale, provoking a merry laugh, was heard from

Quaker lips. However this may be, these meetings were not without their effect upon the imaginations of the younger members of the family, as a change in the daily routine, returning at stated intervals and looked forward to from a distance ; and upon the character, as bringing them into closer contact with thoughtful men and women in their most thoughtful mood. It was a part of the Quaker's moral and social training, and not to be forgotten in the study of a life more than half of which was passed under Quaker influences.

Recreation came with the duties of rural life, and partly under the guise of competition,—to cut the broadest swath, turn the deepest furrow, get the most work out of the oxen without straining them, lift the heaviest weight, and shape the new-mown hay into the neatest and firmest stack. Then, for the young Greenes, there was a swim in the clear cool river at the close of a sultry day ; a half-hour on the smooth ice of the well-sheltered pond by winter starlight or moonlight, or before the tardy sun called them to their morning task ; and, most prized of all, the merry huskings¹ in October evenings, which even the dread of the relentless rod could not always keep from running into a dance, — that greatest of abominations to the eyes of a Quaker.

Several anecdotes of Nathanael Greene's boyhood have been preserved, which, if not very remarkable,

¹ Those scenes so well described in "The corn-husks rustle and the corn-Barlow's "Hasty Pudding," where cobs crack."

have at least the merit of being perfectly authentic. An early playmate of his, whom I remember well, used to talk with great pride of his old companion's feats of strength. Dancing he was particularly fond of, and, being a general favorite, he was always sure to be told beforehand whenever a husking was to end in a dance. Nor, as his brothers used to relate, was the pleasure any the less coveted for the rigor of the prohibition or the certainty of the chastisement. His father kept regular hours, and, long before the first set in a modern ball would be started, his orderly family was supposed to be abed and asleep. Then it was that the truant would slip softly from his pillow, put on his clothes, silently raise the window, and let himself cautiously down upon the soft grass of the yard. I have forgotten how he got back again, but for this too he found a way; and if on any of those autumn nights his watchful parent had made an inspection of the household not too close upon midnight, he would have found the windows shut and all his sons in their places. Thus more than one merry evening was gained, and the future strategist had got almost to look upon himself as secure from detection, when, returning one night from a distant excursion, what should he see by the clear starlight but his father,—horsewhip in hand, pacing with ominous patience to and fro beneath the tell-tale window. It was very clear that, if any Scripture text was the subject of the venerable preacher's meditations at that inauspicious moment, it must

have been Solomon's warning to those who spare the rod. It evidently was not to be spared on this occasion ; but might it not be deprived of its sting ? Thus far the culprit had not been seen. Close by, on the other side of the house, there was a bundle of shingles. With a quickness of thought that stood him well in stead on many a worthier occasion, he stole softly round the corner, stuffed as many shingles under his coat as he needed to form an impervious corselet, then, coming forward with well-feigned terror, submitted to his chastisement ; not forgetting that vehement Ohs ! and Ahs ! were an essential part of the comedy.

Better things, however, were mingled with this love of forbidden pleasure. Literary culture was not in favor with the Quakers. "I was educated a Quaker," he writes in 1772, looking back with something like bitterness of heart upon this period of his life, "and amongst the most superstitious sort. My father was a man of great piety, had an excellent understanding, and was governed in his conduct by humanity and kind benevolence, but his mind was overshadowed with prejudice against literary accomplishments." Still, reading was necessary as a means of reading the Bible, and writing and ciphering as a means of doing business accurately. And therefore, in the long winter evenings, an itinerant teacher was employed to teach the boys to read, write, and cipher. This was all that Nathanael Greene knew at the age of fourteen ; nor did the little book-shelf in the sitting-

room corner contain anything to awaken a desire of knowing more.

One day, however, in a winter ramble, chance threw into his path a young man of the name of Giles, a collegian on a vacation visit to East Greenwich, who, talking to him about college and college studies, and arousing the curiosity that had hitherto slept so calmly but was never to sleep again, glides into history for a moment and then vanishes forever. Nathanael Greene returned from that day's walk another boy, — returned to the forge and the farm and the mill, to his station at the anvil and his seat by the hopper ; but not to the content of being foremost at his daily work, and leader in the morning and evening sports of his companions. As he looked upon the running stream, the growing grain, the mysterious light and motion of the stars, — even as he watched the revolving wheel, and the reddening iron, or shaped with his ponderous hammer the anchor which was to fasten its pointed fluke into the oozy bottom of some distant sea, — questions and doubts and longings came crowding upon his mind, and he had neither book nor friend to answer them. The day of unquestioning faith was passed. Henceforth, to believe, he must first understand.

It must have been an anxious moment in the father's life when this son, so full of promise, came to him and asked him for better means of study. All his life-long distrust of learning must have risen up in his mind at the appeal, and hardened him

against it. But though a prejudiced man, he was a just man. His boy had done his duty in the forge and the mill, and was it not the father's duty to grant his request? In the end it proved a first step in his own disenfranchisement; for a few years later he went further still, and studied Locke's *Essay on the Understanding*, making himself master of its most abstruse discussions.

Two miles from Potowomut, on a green hillside that slopes gently downward to a retired little inlet of Narraganset Bay, stands East Greenwich, then, as now, a quiet rural village, with large elms throwing their fraternal branches over its principal street, and compact wooden houses scattered loosely over its surface, each with its little garden in the rear. Here was a court-house, here was a Baptist meeting-house, and just beyond the hill-top, in a little valley through which the Masquachugh flows with a slender current and a pleasant murmur to mingle with the waters of Greenwich Cove, stood the plain wooden building in which Nathanael Greene the elder was wont, when his thoughts waxed fervent within him, to pour them forth in words that sank deep into the hearts of his hearers. And here, too, lived a teacher by the name of Maxwell,—Master Maxwell, the old men of my boyhood still called him, who had brought with him much learning from the schools and colleges of his native Scotland. Under his guidance young Greene began Latin and geometry, and, talking with him, felt the longings which his conversation with Giles had

awakened grow more definite and distinct. How far his Latin was carried, it is no longer possible to determine. His brother Christopher used to tell of his going up into a little room over the kitchen to study his lessons without interruption. Duponceau told Longfellow and me in 1835, that in a long evening which he passed with General Greene and Baron Steuben, on their journey southward in 1780, "Greene turned the conversation upon the Latin poets, with whom he seemed perfectly familiar."¹ But I find no other testimony upon the subject. There are no quotations from Latin authors in his letters, except one in English from Seneca's epistles, which he may have read in a translation. His Horace, which he is known to have read constantly, was Smart's two little duodecimos with the English facing the text, well known and duly prized by the school-boys of two generations ago ; and the Cæsar that he purchased in 1774 was Duncan's translation without the text. The extent of his Latin studies is very doubtful.

But about his Euclid there is no doubt. He had bought the volume with his own earnings, a solid octavo stoutly bound in dark sheep-skin, and he devoted himself to the study of it with the ardor of a vigorous mind in its first taste of positive science. It became his companion at the forge and in the

¹ I have also a letter from him —still unfortunately in manuscript. upon the subject, and he afterwards I am indebted for my knowledge of repeated the same anecdote in his it to my friend Friederich Kapp, the memoirs, — a very interesting work, historian of Steuben and De Kalb.

mill, and in my boyhood his brothers still loved to point out the seat by the forge where he would study it while the iron was heating, and tell with proud complacency, how, when his turn called him to the grist-mill, he would often forget himself in his book long after the last kernel had been shaken from the hopper.

Summer brought no relaxation in his daily labors, but the long winter evenings were all his own, and well did he turn them to account. No part of New England life was more characteristic, or has left a deeper impression than these evenings by the winter fireside.¹ The huge chimney was all ablaze with the crackling wood fire ; and if the tallow candles gave a dim light, the fire-light on the walls and the bright coals on the hearth lent a cheerful glow to the room, that seldom failed to awaken a kindred glow in the heart. In the snug corner, sheltered from the draft of window or door, sat the mother with her knitting-needles ; or on Saturday evenings, her darning-needle flashing swiftly to and fro in her skilful fingers. It was thus that the warm yarn stocking and the stout mitten grew steadily day by day, without encroaching upon the other duties of the industrious housewife. Right over against her, in his straight-backed wooden-seated chair, sat the father. His day's work is done,—you need not ask him whether well or ill, for the day's history is

¹ I gladly record my indebtedness “Snow-Bound,”—beautiful poetry to Whittier’s charming picture in and true history.

written on his face, and the evening's history may be easily read beforehand in the contracted or the open brow. Sometimes, when he has been kept out in the cold longer than usual, you will see a mug on the hot ashes, just within reach of the heat from the coals. It is filled with cider from his own press, and before he drinks it a little ginger will be mixed with it to give it a warmer glow, and a hot iron stirred in it to make it froth and bubble. Close round the "resplendent brass" of the andirons, you would often see a sputtering row of apples ; and often too the quick sharp blow of the hammer would tell that the rich shagbark had not failed in the October woods. Happy was the fireside whose circle was filled with sons and daughters ready to lighten the task of father and mother and confirm their hopes.

There was no daughter at Nathanael Greene's fireside, the only one he had ever had, Phebe, who, though the child of his second wife, bore the name of the first, not living to complete her first year. But eight sons formed a goodly circle. Benjamin and Thomas were children of his first wife, his cousin, Phebe Greene. The other six, of Mary Mott, his second wife. Mary Rodman, who took the wife's seat on "the 28th day of the 11th month, 1754," was childless, but quickly learnt to look upon her husband's children as her own.

Of these six, the eldest was named Jacob, first of that name in the family record. We shall meet him by and by as commissary of purchases, when his

brother became Quartermaster-General. We meet him also in the State Legislature, of which he was several times a member. When his brother joined the army, he took his place at Coventry, where he lived to the day of his sudden death in 1805. Phebe came next, and then Nathanael. William followed, the only bachelor of the six. I remember him well in his feeble old age, as the first outside of our own roof to whom we went with our "Merry Christmas," always finding a large Christmas cake in wait for our coming. Elihu was the fifth, an old man when I knew him, but a cheery, hale old man, still active at the forge, still ready to raise the dam gate, and take his seat by the hopper, and, what we boys prized most of all, ever gentle and patient and kind. His wife had long been dead, but he had never taken to himself a second, unwilling, perhaps, to give to another the place that had once been filled by a grand-niece of Franklin. But strongest, heartiest, and halest of all, in my boyish days, was the fifth son, Christopher, straight and firm, with the broad forehead and decided mouth of his brother the General, and a voice that even in old age rang out as clear and shrill as a bugle-call. Kind at heart though quick of temper, he too was an active, busy man to the last. It was but two days before his death that he followed me to the door to shake hands with me a second time, and the very day before it he rode his favorite filly to Greenwich. With Elihu he lived on the old homestead, and carried on the old

business. The little sloop that conveyed their anchors to Providence and Newport was named the "Two Brothers," in commemoration of their fraternal love, and it is still remembered with pride that in their long partnership they never thought of a settlement of accounts. A son of Christopher yet holds the old homestead, which thus far has never passed out of the name. In one thing the two brothers differed,—for while Elihu remained a widower, Christopher married twice, and each time a daughter of Governor Samuel Ward. The last and youngest child was Perry, different in many respects from his brothers, our traditions say, but of fine talents and engaging address.

But they were all boys still, and with life all before them, in the days of which I am now telling; and, hopeful as the father must have felt when he cast his eyes round upon them, his hopes can hardly have gone beyond the promise which they gave of growing up to walk in his footsteps as thrifty and useful members of society. No visions of Guilford and Eutaw came to disturb his tranquil anticipations of a peaceful life and peaceful death for all. .

It was around these firesides that Colonial history was first formed, father repeating it to son till family tradition grew into narrative. John Greene's story was an eventful one,—the story of exile and persecution for conscience' sake. It must have had a touch of the stern Puritan days in it, though he was not a Puritan. Like Roger Williams, he claimed "soul liberty," and was driven from Massachusetts.

Like his friend Gorton, he claimed the fullest exercise of that liberty, and joined with him in the purchase and settlement of Warwick. He was one of the twelve who were summoned to submit themselves to a Massachusetts tribunal, and only escaped, by timely flight, the siege, condemnation, and imprisonment which fell so heavily upon his companions.¹ Like them, too, his convictions won peace for him at last, and he was repeatedly chosen by his fellow-citizens to offices of honor and trust. Nor was he indifferent to his profession. There is still a manuscript volume in existence, in which, anticipating Buchan, he endeavors to bring the description and treatment of disease within the comprehension of every father and mother. The old Quaker's heart must have glowed as he told the story of this first emigrant, for in the religious independence which Gorton taught there was a suggestive resemblance to the independence of forms which George Fox taught. From that day civil honors were found in each generation of the Greenes, each having its Secretary, or Deputy, or Governor.

And now too, in these very years, 1753-1755, the name of Washington first began to be heard at Colonial firesides ; his journey through the wilderness ; his gallant stand with a handful of followers at the "Great Meadows" ; his almost miraculous

¹ Greene's connection with Gorton is expressly stated in "Some Notices of Samuel Gorton, &c.," edited by Mr. Charles Deane. "John Greene, one of his chief proselytes, gave Gorton half of his divided lands at Pawtuxet." (p. 35.) See also Staples's edition of "Simplicie's Defence."

preservation on the fatal field of the Monongahela. Much as the rigid Quaker detested war, these things touched the Colonists too nearly not to find a greedy ear in every circle. How did young Greene feel when he first heard the name of his future leader and friend ?

One part of these leisure hours, says a family tradition, was still devoted to work ; not, indeed, his regular work, but to the making of toy anchors and other toys of iron, grinding off the callous skin from his hands that he might hold the tiny things more easily. These were his own, and to these he looked for pocket-money, for he could hardly expect his father to buy him books. His only real holiday was when the sloop took her load of anchors to Newport, for then he could sell his little venture, and add, with the proceeds, a new book to his library. For the Newport of those days was the great city of the Colony, and it was not without something like an expanding of his conceptions that, as the little sloop rounded Long Wharf, he caught his first glimpse of ships that, but a few weeks before, had been lying at a wharf in London or Bristol ; that, as he walked up Church Lane, he saw the steeple of Trinity rising high over Berkeley's organ, and farther on the Corinthian portico of the Redwood Library opening upon more books than it seemed possible to read in a lifetime. One of these excursions proved a turning point in his progress.

He had sold his wares, and hurried off, money in

hand, to the bookstore, an eager, impetuous boy in spite of his broad-brimmed hat and peaceful drab, neither of them, perhaps, altogether free from the traces of the mill.

“I want to buy a book.” “What book?” asked the bookseller, stopping short in his conversation with an earnest-faced young man in the dress of a clergyman, and looking, it may be, somewhat quizzingly at his new customer. The clergyman turned to look also, and saw so much to please him in the open countenance and bright eye of the blushing boy, that he took him kindly by the hand, and questioned him intelligently about his reading. It was more than a book that young Greene got that day, for he got himself a friend,—one who had read many books, and knew the human heart, and loved knowledge in all her manifold forms. Not many years afterwards that clergyman became the head of Yale College, and, as President Stiles, labored sedulously to the close of a long life in moulding the hearts and minds of ingenuous youth. But of the hundreds who went out into the world with his mark upon them, there was not one who laid his lessons more fruitfully to heart than the Quaker boy whom he first taught what books to buy. Nor among the many good deeds that he did, and wise counsels that he gave, was there one more fraught with important consequences to the freedom and prosperity of his country than the work of spontaneous kindness which he performed that day.

CHAPTER II.

Greene's Studies. — New Acquaintances. — Lindley Murray. — Visit to New York. — John Jay. — Inoculation. — Family Lawsuit. — Greene reads Law Books. — Growth of Mind. — Personal Appearance. — Manners and Habits.

THE first fruit of Stiles's friendship was a knowledge of Locke on the Understanding, — the text-book of every Englishman of that day who undertook to study the laws of mental action. It came to Greene just when he was prepared for it by the eager gropings of his own mind; and, following close upon Euclid, gave additional force to those lessons of rigorous demonstration and connected reasoning which are the best fruits of a careful study of the great geometer. It opened also a new and wider field of inquiry, and prepared him for entering with keener relish upon the investigation of moral and political truth. Watts's Logic was another of the works to which he was deeply indebted at this period; and good old Rollin, still preserving in his diffuseness the pure spirit of classic antiquity, was his first guide in history and polite literature. In English, Swift became his model, particularly the Drapier's Letters, although I do not find any proof that he ever thought of applying to the study of them that

happy method by which Franklin learnt to infuse into his own style so much of the graceful simplicity and idiomatic elegance of his chosen master, Addison.¹

Thus his mind grew apace. Books became his favorite companions ; knowledge for her own sake his highest ambition. But no thought of a change of occupation seems ever to have disturbed the serenity of his daily task. He was born to the plough and anvil, and that share in public life which most Colonists took and some member of his family had always taken, and was content to remain where fortune had placed him. His only complaint was, “I feel the mists of ignorance to surround me”; and all that he asked of his books, that they should help him to break through these mists.

The acquaintance of Dr. Stiles brought him into contact with men of cultivation, giving him glimpses of a refinement towards which he felt himself irresistibly attracted, and showing him how much sweeter the intercourse of friends becomes when elevated by the love of letters. Another new acquaintance, formed, like the first, in one of his trips to Newport, but nearer to him in age, and, like himself, a Quaker by birth and education, was Lindley Murray,—the future grammarian of three generations of ungrateful school-boys. From him Greene learnt much that he could hardly have learnt to the same advantage from an older person ; discussing the books that he had read as

¹ See Sparks's Franklin, Vol. I. p. 18.

boy talks with boy, and looking up to him with that blending of faith and emulation which only boys and girls can feel. Grammar, however, if we are to judge by the apparent unconsciousness with which Greene makes a plural noun the nominative of a singular verb, can hardly have yet taken the place in the mind of his friend which it was soon to take and to hold through life. Murray's present ambition was to become a lawyer, and his good fortune led him to study law in the same office with John Jay. May not Greene, in some of his visits to him in New York, have met in his society, as a young lawyer just welcoming his first brief, the man whom a few years later he was to address from camp as President of the Congress from which he held his commission?

Of these visits to New York, however, only one positive record remains. The small-pox was still the scourge of all classes, in spite of inoculation, which thousands either rejected as useless, or condemned as rebellion against the will of God. Massachusetts had rejected it on its first introduction, and it was only by the refusal of the Council to confirm the vote of the Representatives, that the courageous Boylston was enabled to continue the practice of it. The Rhode Island Assembly rejected it as late as 1772, in spite of the exertions of its most intelligent members. Finding the disease in New York, Greene had himself inoculated, and, passing through it without any other permanent mark than a slight blemish in the right eye,

which in no way impaired the distinctness of his sight, won for himself a sense of personal security which nothing else could have given, and the importance of which made itself felt in the very first year of the war. We shall find him one of the earliest and most constant advocates of the inoculation of the army.

About this time [1760] the death of his two half-brothers brought a lawsuit into the family. The principles which it involved were so intricate, that it was sent to England by appeal. And here, too, we catch a glimpse of another distinctive trait of Greene's character; for being intrusted by his father with the management of the case as far as the collecting of evidence and conferences with lawyers were concerned, he procured himself a Jacob's Law Dictionary and made himself master of its contents. A few years later Blackstone also was welcomed to his shelves with as pure a joy as Gibbon felt when, at nearly the same age, and not far from the same time, he "exchanged a bank-note of twenty pounds for the twenty volumes of the *Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions.*"¹ Another consequence of the lawsuit, and for his future career by no means the least important, was the acquaintance that he formed with members of the bench and the bar, whom he soon began to associate with upon the footing of one who has something to teach, as well as a great deal to learn.

And thus he grew up to manhood, laying deeper

¹ *Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon, (4to ed.,) Vol. I. p. 84.*

foundations than he knew of; a cheerful, vigorous, thoughtful young man, foremost in all the labors of the forge, the farm, and the mill; foremost also in feats of strength and skill; fond of the society of females, who "never felt lonely where he was, for he always knew how to entertain them";¹ fond of the society of cultivated men; a great lover of books; a curious inquirer into the reasons and causes of things; a subtle scrutinizer of men and their actions; a thoughtful observer of Nature, and keenly alive to her genial influences; fonder of listening than of talking, where there was anything to be learned; with no ambition beyond the possession of a comfortable home, and fortune enough to enable him to buy books and command a few leisure hours to read them in; a man, in short, to puzzle the staid elders who sat on the high seats in the meeting-house, and even to make his pious father sometimes doubt the fulfilment of the prophecy with which astrology-loving Dr. Spencer had announced his birth as of one that was to be "a great man in Israel."

His health was good, and both by constitution and habit he was capable of bearing exposure and fatigue. A few years later the asthma came to harass him with sleepless nights. Though not over five feet ten in height, he was strongly built, with broad shoulders, a full chest, and vigorous limbs. In his right knee there was a slight stiffness, enough, it would seem, by the manner in

¹ Words used by an old lady who knew Greene to Mr. Rousmanier.

which it is mentioned, to be seen in his gait, but not enough to prevent him from running, and jumping, and wrestling with the strongest and most active of his companions.¹ His face was a well-filled oval, with all the features clearly defined, though none of them, except, perhaps, the forehead, large enough to arrest the attention at a first glance. As you looked more closely you would be struck by the prominence of the lower part of the brow, that part just over the eyes, where phrenologists place the organ of locality. The eyes themselves were of a clear, liquid blue, which kindled under excitement to an intense and flashing light.² His nose was rather Grecian than Roman, and such as the sculptor of a strong, manly face loves to chisel, the outline clear from the root downward, and the nostrils slightly expanding into an expression of prompt and vigorous decision. The mouth, too, with its deep-set corners and full lips, told of quick, firm utterances and a strong will; but it told of tenderness also, and the power of keen enjoyment. The chin, full, rounded, and double, told the same story, giving a dash of every-day humanity to an expression which, if derived from the eyes alone, would have been an expression of pure intellect. For as you look at the eyes they seem to be lambent with a combined light,

¹ See Stone's Howland, p. 40.

² Lest the reader should tax me with exaggeration, I hasten to add that this peculiarity was told me by my uncle, Colonel Samuel Ward, whose name will often recur in these pages, and whose statements no one who knew him would venture to call in question.

partly from within and partly from without, as of a soul alternately questioning itself and the world that surrounds it. But as you look at the mouth you detect, under the possibility of stern compression, the possibility of joyous sensation and lively sallies of humor. Indeed, this humor formed one of the most vivid recollections of those who had known him in the intimacy of domestic life ; and his brothers, to the day of their death, could never mention *Tristram Shandy* without dilating upon the exquisite comicality of his impersonation of Dr. Slop.

His bearing was that of dignified self-possession, rather than of ease and grace. Indeed, the grace which the intercourse of polished society gives, he had no means of learning ; and still less the grace of the dancing-school ; for his dancing, well as he loved it, was such as country boys and girls learn from some older companion or chance teacher, and practise with more vigor than skill. “ You dance stiffly,” said a partner to him once, rallying him upon the halt in his right leg. “ Very true,” he replied, “ but you see that I dance strong.” But going into the world with a consciousness of many disadvantages to overcome, he became a close observer, never failing to turn to account every opportunity of making an acquisition or correcting a defect.

His temper was naturally impetuous, for he was of a bilious, nervous temperament, but it was brought under early control, and he bore among

his companions the reputation of a genial man, though a firm and resolute one. Deliberate in forming his opinions where circumstances admitted of deliberation, he was never unduly tenacious of them, nor arrogant in enforcing them, but always ready to listen to objections, and yield to them if well founded.

It is not an easy thing to go back to the boyhood of a great man, and distinguish the steps by which he grew up in mind and character. And even of those who knew him best there are few who are not ready to fancy that they had already discovered in his youth the indications of all that he became in manhood. Still the intellectual tastes, the resolute perseverance, and the systematic industry which characterized Greene's public life were undoubtedly formed long before he became a public man; and the administrative capacity which he displayed in the Quartermaster-General's department was but the extension to a larger field of the sound judgment and rigorous method with which he conducted the humbler interests of the farms and forges of Potowomut and Coventry.

CHAPTER III.

Potowomut. — The Farm. — The Forge and Mills. — Coventry. — Whence the Iron for the Forge came. — From Potowomut to Coventry. — The New House. — Greene among his Neighbors. — David Howell.

THE soil of Potowomut was light and thin, yielding enough for the family table, but adding little to the family purse. This, however, was not the elder Greene's only farm, for he had made large investments in land in different parts of the State, and was as deeply interested in agriculture as in manufactures. But the agriculture of those days was, even in its best forms, little better than a mere routine ; the son still holding tenaciously to the methods of the grandfather, as they came down to him unchanged in the lessons of his father. If books were consulted at all, English literature in young Greene's boyhood had nothing better than the "Book of Husbandry" and Tupper's "Five Hundred Points," and a few others of almost equal antiquity. Elliot's "Field Husbandry in New England" was not published till 1760 ; Arthur Young had not yet begun the observations and reports which stimulated Washington's agricultural instincts so keenly ; and many years were yet to pass before chemistry, analyzing soils and

plants and manures, should reveal the prolific law of the constant circulation of matter and force. And thus in agriculture the elder Greene had but little to teach his sons beyond what he had learnt from his father.

But the forge and mills gave very different returns; and when we remember how England looked askance upon the manufacturing industry of the Colonies, these early efforts of Rhode Island industry acquire something of the importance of general history. Jabez Greene, grandson of the first John Greene, was the original settler of Potowomut, and Thomas Hill was an original partner in the mills. As early, however, as 1740, two years before the birth of the third Nathanael, the whole property passed into the hands of the Greenes. Meanwhile this branch of the family had become Quakers, and the peaceful doctrines of George Fox, and the peaceful industries of the forge and the mill, seem to have taken possession of the "Place of all the Fires" simultaneously. The pure spirit of brotherly love seems to have come with them.

Jabez Greene died without making a will, although he had declared his intention of making one, and told his eldest son, James, that he meant to divide his estate equally among his children. By the laws of Rhode Island James became sole heir, and the first use that he made of his independent control of the property was to carry out his father's design and divide it with his brothers. And

thus the property was held and improved in common by the six sons of Jabez, of whom Nathanael, the preacher, was the fourth. Already, in 1743, the forge, store, and merchandise were valued at £8,055, with £2,408 of uncollected debts. The chief care of the works seems gradually to have devolved upon Nathanael, and when his sons grew to man's estate they were admitted to the business as partners.

This business, if we take into consideration the meagre supply market and difficult communications of those days, was sufficiently extensive to require no ordinary share of commercial as well as of productive talent. The wheat was brought from Virginia in vessels owned or chartered by the firm, and the flour sent to Newport and Providence, the principal markets of the Colony. The coal came from Virginia also, and the best iron from Pennsylvania. Of all these a constant and regular supply was required. Merchandise was also needed for the store,—country goods, such as workingmen and their families used,—and of these a full provision was kept constantly on hand. Then the anchors were to be sent to market, and the proceeds of all these various industries collected and put to use. What with his duties as a preacher, and his cares as a merchant, manufacturer, and farmer, Nathanael Greene was a very busy man.

The grist-mill was a frame building on the west bank of the river, a few yards below the dam, duly provided with all the necessary apparatus for

making meal and flour. The constant whir of the millstone and jar of the hopper, mingling with the gurgle of the water as it rushed through the gate, and its deeper roar as it dashed over the dam, made it a difficult place to talk in, though, as young Nathanael grew up, it became one of his favorite places for study. For many years it was the only mill in the neighborhood, and through the whole of the first quarter of the present century farmers and farmers' boys still continued to ride thither from a wide circuit round, with their bag of corn slung over their horse's back, to have it ground under the eye of the two last survivors of the two generations of brothers. And it is not uninteresting to know, as we trace the connections of civilization, that the second flour-mill that was ever constructed in Chili was constructed by Samuel Ward Greene, the fourth son of the younger of those two brothers. Thus the knowledge that was acquired on the banks of the Potowomut helped to free fertile Chili from her dependence upon a foreign market for the most essential article of daily food; mysterious link in the subtle chain which binds remote lands and different races together.

Close by the side of the mill, but on lower ground, was the forge,—a larger building, with a broad shingle roof coming down so near to the ground on the west side that it was easy to get on it and play. Two broad doors opened upon the river-bank, where the sloop lay as at a natural

wharf. Within were three separate forges, each with its own anvil, its own chimney, and its own huge bellows. The anchor anvil stood in the middle, directly under a great trip-hammer, which, as it dealt its sharp, quick blows, rising and falling with the turning of the wheel,—wheel and water both unseen, but sending forth a whirring and gurgling sound from behind the dark screen of the eastern wall,—had, as I well remember, something of wonder and of mystery in it to the eye and ear of childhood. A small forge was reserved for the common work of a blacksmith's shop.

The two banks of the river were connected by a bridge just below the dam; and there, when the day's work was done, the boys loved to take their stand, and fish for eels in the dark water below.

The house, a plain wooden edifice, low in the ceilings, like most of the houses of early colonial days, but substantially built, and well adapted to the modes of life of a large Quaker family, stood almost within stone's throw of the forge, upon the brow of a small hill, up and down whose easy slope the boys used to indulge in many a frolic on their way to and from their work, not always, as they grew warm in their game, distinguishing their father from an elder brother.

About a year before the birth of General Greene the six brothers had built another forge on the ~~Pawtucket~~^{axe+} River, in the township of Coventry, where they had purchased a large tract of land.

Here, too, was a fine stream of water to set their simple machinery agoing, and a fine hill — the rocky water-shed which holds the north and south branches of the Pawtucket apart — to build on. It was not till many years later that the building-site was used; but so well was the water-power turned to account, that, on the death of Jabez, in 1753, his quarter was estimated at £865. By 1768 over a hundred families had gathered around Greene's forge as their home.¹

The iron used in these works was all American iron. The refined iron was brought chiefly from Pennsylvania by Apponaug, then a flourishing little seaport in the northwest corner of Coweset or Greenwich Bay, though scarcely ever visited now by anything but a lumberman from Maine or a collier from Pennsylvania. The rough ore came in part from the iron-beds in the adjacent town of Cranston, and was carted by farmers in their ox-carts to be smelted, with the help of black sand from Block Island, in the smelting-furnace which formed part of the works. Some of it was bog-iron from the neighboring swamps, and some was obtained by dragging the fresh-water ponds, which are spread like a net all over the western sections of the State. What use was made of Elliot's discovery of "the art of producing malleable iron from the black sea sand" I have not been able to ascertain.²

¹ I have to thank for some of these details the Hon. Henry Rousmanier, of Centreville, who, in preparing his valuable sketches of the valley of the Pawtucket, made a careful examination of the Warwick Records.

² See Holmes's *Annals of America*, Vol. II. p. 123.

When the work was done, the anchors had to be carried to Apponaug in carts, and thence by water to Newport, the principal market for naval stores, and the great seaport of the colony. So well did the reputation of the Potowomut and Coventry works become established, that, more than half a century from their foundation, when the father of Commodore Perry lay at Newport in command of the "General Greene," he sent to the Greene forge for his anchors; but so effacing are the habits of American life, that you may now go from door to door all through Coventry, and scarcely find a man who can tell you where they stood. Local circumstances have preserved somewhat better the recollection of the forge and mill at Potowomut. But, with the exception of the dam, all traces of those also have been swept away within my own remembrance.

The distance between the two works was about ten miles, by a rough but pleasant road through green lanes, bordered in many parts by thick woods of walnut and oak, in some by lower growths of cedar; opening on the highest ridges upon a rich foreground of forest, and a broad background of water and islands; the bright waters and green islands of Narragansett Bay,—green then, for the ruthless hand of war had not yet stripped them of their sheltering trees. At the bottom of the valleys, the road ran along the pebbly margin of a fresh-water pond, or crossed the course of a brawling rivulet,—ponds and brooks over

whose fringed waters old Walton would have hung in dreamy ecstasy throughout the long summer day. Over this road, to and fro, one of the partners had to pass in almost daily rides; and it was a pleasant thought for the father, as years thickened upon him, that he had such a sturdy band of sons at his call. But already his chief reliance was the son who bore his own name; and thus in 1770, when it was decided that one of them should go and live at Coventry, the choice naturally fell upon him.

The removal to Coventry was a great event in this uniform though busy life. From childhood that son had lived under the same roof with his father and brothers, and now, in his twenty-ninth year, he was to build himself a house apart. We shall see by and by how his heart still clung to Potowomut. For his building-site he chose a spot on the hill-side, sheltered on the west by a natural wood, which still covered the brow of the hill; sloping in front, like a green terrace, down to the brink of the river, and looking out over a broad belt of woodland towards Coweset Bay. From the top of the hill the eye reached the graceful curve and sparkling waters of the bay itself, which seems to shrink with a coy smile from the outstretched arms of Potowomut, and nestle securely under the bald headland of Warwick Neck. The house was a neat two-story building, with four rooms on each floor, divided by a wide entry, and on the exterior something of an air of architecture, which still

pleases, if it does not satisfy, the eye. It was a great step in advance, both outside and in, of the old homestead at Potowomut.

Greene was soon settled, and his days resumed their even tenor. He was often in the saddle, making all his land journeys on horseback,—an unconscious preparation for the future,—and a mode of travelling to which his love of animals gave a peculiar zest. “His first visit, after an absence from home,” says one who was often in the family, “was always to the stable.”¹ To Newport, instead of the old route by Potowomut River, he would go by a sloop from Greenwich; sometimes, as a well-authenticated tradition attests, timing his movements so as to meet a party of friends at Hope,—a small rocky island half-way down the bay,—and pass the evening there in dancing. Thus much of his life was still an out-of-doors life, bringing him into constant contact with men, and almost always as a controller of their actions. Sometimes, when he found himself singled out for an invitation while others of “equal claims” were passed by, he would turn the circumstance over in his mind with a kind of pleased surprise, and be “almost persuaded that he was a person of some importance.” Nor was he the only one that thought so. “Mr. Greene is a very remarkable man,” said David Howell, then a tutor in Rhode Island College, but distinguished in later life at the bar, on the bench, and in Congress, and

¹ Communicated by Mr. Rousmanier.

who had ridden down to Coventry over night to borrow a book of him. It was not every day that either of them found such a man to talk with, and the conversation naturally ran on till late in the evening. Great was Howell's surprise, when he came down next morning before daylight, to make sure of reaching home in time for his recitation, to find Greene up before him, and "poring over a book by the fire." And as a proof of the delicacy of Greene's hospitality I will add, that when on parting for the night his guest had apologized for the necessity he should be under of leaving too early in the morning to bid him good by, he made no offer of breakfast, but when morning came the table was found set, and the breakfast ready.

CHAPTER IV.

Death of Greene's Father.—Greene a Voter.—First Steps in Public Life.—First Political Letter.—In the Assembly.—Gasper.—Takes his Stand.—William Greene of Warwick.—Henry Merchant.—Progress of the Revolution.—Greene's Opinion of Governor Ward as Delegate to Congress.—Militia Laws Revised.—Kentish Guards.—James M. Varnum.—Christopher Greene.—Letter to Varnum.—Trip to Boston to buy a Musket.

NOT long after his removal to Coventry his father died; “an event,” he writes, “which turned all our affairs into different channels, that made it requisite for me to give the closest application and attention to the settlement of matters.” Still, no material change was made by it in the business relations of the brothers; and everything continued to go on, as of old, in the name of the whole family. All had been trained to work with the feeling that in working for their father they were working for themselves; and, when the estate passed into their hands, they were prepared to share equally in its duties and profits.

In Rhode Island the right of suffrage, except for the eldest son of a freeholder, was founded upon the possession of real estate of the value of forty pounds sterling. Nathanael's half-brother Thomas, who died in 1760, had given him an estate in

West Greenwich, and upon this he was admitted a freeman in Warwick in April, 1765; making, as a Quaker, his "solemn affirmation" to the protest against "bribery and corruption" which the law of that day prescribed. Thus, within a month after the passage of the Stamp Act, and just about the time when his future opponent, Cornwallis, became a "Lord of the Bedchamber," Greene became a voter; little dreaming the one of the other, or of the desperate race they were to run, or the bloody field on which they were to meet in the wilds of Carolina. Three years later, when the non-importation resolutions of 1768 were introduced, Greene was on the committee for canvassing the county for signatures; and within the very year of his removal to Coventry he was chosen to represent his new home in the General Assembly. His earliest public act in this new home was to set on foot a movement for the establishment of a school.

The great Rhode Island controversy of those days, in which town and country waged war upon each other under the names of Hopkins and Ward, until the original cause of the dispute became merged in a personal contest between party leaders, had been brought to an end, under the overshadowing influence of the impending contest with England, two years before he entered the legislature. Family ties had naturally placed him in the Ward party, and it is not improbable that he took an active part in the dispute. But the record

of his political career is too imperfect at this point to permit us to follow his first steps in public life as closely as there is always a wish to do when the later steps became so important. His earliest political letter that has been preserved is addressed to Moses Brown of Providence, and turns upon the opposition to the re-election of Judge Potter. "I should be remiss," he writes, "not to give you timely information of all matters that were likely to concern civil polity or the well-being of the government, and in an especial manner when I thought you would be likely to adopt any plan to obviate their schemes. I know not for what reason, but there is the greatest opposition forming against Judge Potter's ensuing election that I ever saw in my life against any representative. His conduct and mine hath been almost uniformly the same in public measures, except the affair of your Bridge; and they have not the least objection to my going again, if I will not support the Judge's ensuing election so zealously. . . . Was I not conscious that the Judge would do his town and the government better service than any other person in it, I would not be so strongly attached to his interest as to oppose any man the better sort of people thought worthy, by their suffrage, to represent them in the General Assembly." The interest of this question has long since passed away even from Rhode Island history; but it was a question which called into play the power of reading character and controlling men of one of

the founders of a great nation, and thus becomes a part of the world's history.

Of course, much of Greene's attention as a legislator was given to local details. But some of these local details involved the discussion of fundamental principles; and from what is positively known of his habits of mind, we may reasonably conclude that these discussions became for him the occasions of an enlarged and careful study. When the resolutions of 1774 against the "importation of negroes" were passed, he was not a member of the Assembly; but his declaration of a few years later, "As for slavery, nothing can be said in its defence," shows what his vote would have been. But in the legislature and out of it he was henceforth a public man, taking an active interest, even when he did not take a leading part in public measures. The training that was to fit him for dealing with men, and bearing great responsibilities, was begun.

He was not present at the burning of the "Gasper," although a local tradition makes him one of the leaders;¹ but he went to Providence the next day, and, as he rode along, must have seen the smoke floating over the smouldering hull, as two years later he saw it floating over the ruins of Charlestown.² Yet his name was mixed up with this bold enterprise in the English reports of it,

¹ Colonel E. Bowen, who was present, told me that General Greene was not.

² Letter to S. Ward, Jr., January 25, 1773.

and in this offensive connection probably first met the royal eye, which it was soon to meet still more offensively. When the “new-fangled court,” as he calls it, assembled at Newport to receive information against the persons suspected of taking a part in the destruction of the royal cutter, he condemned it as “alarming to every virtuous mind and lover of liberty in America.” He condemns also the attitude of the General Assembly, which “seems to have lost all that spirit of independence and public virtue that has ever distinguished them since they have first been incorporated, and sunk down into a tame submission and entire acquiescence to ministerial mandates.” Already his views embraced the whole country, and the earliest written expression of his political sentiments implies Union: “If this court and mode of trial is established as a precedent, it will naturally affect all the other colonies.”

It is easy to conceive with what interest he read the “Farmers’ Letters,” and how prominent a place he gave in his library to the Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal law, and Novanglus, and the Massachusetts circular, and Otis’s Rights of the British Colonies, and Quincy’s Observations on the Boston Port Bill, and the other tracts of that reasoning period, during which the public mind was preparing itself for open resistance. His own mind was prepared for the worst. “The ministry seem to be determined to imbrue their cursed hands in American blood.”¹

¹ To S. Ward, Jr.

These sentiments brought him into intimate relations with the popular leaders. "I spent last evening with him (Governor Ward), Mr. Marchant, and sundry other gentlemen, at your uncle Greene's," he writes Governor Ward's son, Samuel, January 25, 1773. That uncle Greene was the second William of the Warwick branch, through whom the blood of the first John Greene was mingled with the blood of Roger Williams and Samuel Gorton,—historical names all of them, and representatives of prolific ideas. He, too, was already in public life as associate judge, and was to become chief justice, and, in a very critical moment of the war, governor. The Mr. Marchant was Henry Marchant, the Attorney-General, who had been sent to England two years before to demand the payment of the old war debt, and who was in four years more to take the place which had been so well filled by Samuel Ward in Congress. It is easy to conceive what brought such men together at such a time.

Nor did Greene long have occasion to complain of the spirit of the Assembly. The idea of a General Congress as a means of obtaining redress had been familiar to the popular mind ever since the Congress of 1765, and must have been so often discussed in private as to make the first public suggestion of it almost a matter of chance. But the first official action was that of a town-meeting in Providence on the 17th of May, 1774, instructing their "Deputies to the General Assembly" to use

their influence for promoting a Congress;¹ and as an augury of Union, the very first election sent the leaders of Rhode Island's two great parties to sit in that Congress side by side, and take counsel together for the common defence.

Greene felt all the solemnity of this act. "Heaven bless their (the Congresses') consultations," he wrote Samuel Ward, Jr., "with her seasoning grace, and crown their resolution with success and triumph!" The choice of Governor Ward gave him particular pleasure. "The mean motives of interest, of partial distinction of ministers of state, will have no influence upon his virtuous soul: like Cato of old, he'll stand or fall with the liberties of his country."

In the December session, although not a member of the Assembly, he was put upon "a committee to revise the militia laws of the Colony," and report "as soon as may be."² Events were hastening, and his part becoming daily more important. The cannon had already been removed from Fort George. The resolution to proceed immediately to the formation of a public magazine of powder, lead, and flints, and the recommendation "to all the inhabitants of this colony, that they expend no gunpowder for mere sport and diversion, and in pursuit of game," and the act in pursuance of the report of the committee upon militia laws providing for monthly exercises in "martial discipline,"

¹ Arnold has examined this subject with his usual candor and good sense in the second volume of his History of Rhode Island, p. 334.

² Bartlet's Rhode Island Records, Vol. VIII. p. 262.

and for the manner in which “the forces within this colony shall march to the assistance of any of our sister colonies when invaded or attacked,” close ominously the last year of colonial peace.

Of all these preparations, none came more directly home to his personal feelings than the organization of the Kentish Guards, an independent company for East Greenwich, Warwick, and Coventry, similar in object and plan to those which were organizing all over the country. To these three towns he was bound by peculiar ties; having been born in Warwick, living in Coventry, and going, from childhood, every week to meditate in silence or listen in reverence in the meeting-house that stood thoughtfully amid rows of uninscribed graves on the bank of a mill-pond in a sweet little valley just beyond the hill-top of Greenwich. All the members of this company were his neighbors and acquaintances, some of them his friends. Among its first officers were James Mitchel Varnum, a man of “exalted talents,” whom he “loved and esteemed,” who was to take an honorable place in the civil and military history of the Revolution; and Christopher Greene, who was to follow Arnold to Quebec, defend Red Bank against Donop and his Hessians, and die, sword in hand, in the flower of his age, victim of the negligence of a militia guard. And still, as the war went on, this little nursery of gallant men sent out officers to the regular army, till they numbered nearly thirty in all. Nathanael Greene was among the peti-

tioners for a charter, which was granted in the October session of 1774.¹

But in connection with the Kentish Guards there was a mortification in store for Greene for which he was little prepared. He had entered the company as a private, and without any idea of taking a commission. But this some of his friends would not consent to, and by dint of persuasion they prevailed upon him to let his name be brought forward for a lieutenancy. But they were to encounter an objection which none of them had foreseen. Greene's stiff knee gave, as we have already seen, a limp to his gait; and in the eyes of some of the village critics this limp, though slight, was a serious blemish, unfitting him, not merely for an officer, but even for a private. A limping soldier in ranks like theirs! Greene was thunderstruck. It was the first mortification he had ever received, and he took it sorely to heart. His friends were indignant. Varnum threatened to withdraw his name, and the loss of Varnum's fine person and popular eloquence would have been a serious blow to the half-organized company.

But this was a form of resentment that Greene could not accept, and, not satisfied with having told his friend by word of mouth how he thought and felt about it, he returned to the subject in a letter, which, happily for his memory, still exists

¹ The original draft of the charter also Rhode Island Records, Vol. is among the Varnum Papers. See VII. p. 260.

in his own hand, to show how firmly he already held the rein of his passions, and how early he learned to subject his feelings as a man to his duty as a citizen. And thus he writes from Coventry, on Monday, 2 o'clock, P. M.

“ DEAR SIR: —

“ As I am ambitious of maintaining a place in your esteem, and cannot hope to do it if I discover in my actions a little mind and a mean spirit, I think in justice to myself I ought to acquaint you with the particulars of the subject on which we conversed to-day. I was informed the gentlemen of East Greenwich said that I was a blemish to the company. I confess it is the first stroke of mortification I ever felt from being considered, either in private or public life, a blemish to those with whom I associated. Hitherto I have always had the happiness to find myself respected in society in general, and my friendship courted by as respectable characters as any in the government. Pleased with these thoughts, and anxious to promote the good of my country, and ambitious of increasing the consequence of East Greenwich, I have exerted myself to form a military company there; but little did I think that the gentlemen considered me in the light of an obtruder. My heart is too susceptible of pride, and my sentiments too delicate, to wish a connection where I am considered in an inferior point of light. I have always made it my study to promote the interest of Greenwich, and to cultivate the good opinion of its inhabitants, (so) that the severity of the speech, and the union of sentiment coming from persons so unexpected, might wound the pride of my heart deeper than the force of the observation merited. God knows when I first entered this company, I had not in contemplation

any kind of office, but was fully determined not to accept any ; but Griff and others has been endeavoring to obtain my consent for some weeks past. I never expected that being a member of the company would give me any more consequence in life either as a private soldier or commissioned officer. I thought the cause of liberty was in danger ; and as it was attackt by a military force, it was necessary to cultivate a military spirit amongst the people, that, should tyranny endeavor to make any other advances, we might be prepared to check it in its first sallies. I considered with myself that, if we should never be wanted in that character, it would form a pretty little society in our meetings when we might relax ourselves a few hours from the various occupations of life, and return to our business again with more activity and spirit. I did not want to add any new consequence to myself from the distinction of that company ; if I had been ambitious of promotion in a public character, you yourself can witness for me I have had it in my power, but I always preferred the pleasures of private society to those of public distinction. If I conceive right of the force of the objection of the gentlemen of the town, it was not as an officer, but as a soldier for that my halting was a blemish to the rest. I confess it is my misfortune to limp a little, but I did not conceive it to be so great ; but we are not apt to discover our own defects. I feel the less mortified at it as it's natural, and not a stain or defection that resulted from my actions. I have pleased myself with the thought of serving under you, but as it is the general opinion that I am unfit for such an undertaking, I shall desist. I feel not the less inclination to promote the good of the company, because I am not to be one of its members. I will do anything that's in my power to procure the charter. I will

bear my proportion of the expense until the company is formed and completely equipt. Let me entreat you, sir, if you have any regard for me, not to forsake the company at this critical season, for I fear the consequences; if you mean to oblige me by it, I assure you it will not. I would not have the company break and disband for fifty dollars; it would be a disgrace upon the county, and upon the town in particular. I feel more mortification than resentment, but I think it would manifest a more generous temper to have given me their opinions in private than to make proclamation of it in public as a capital objection; for nobody loves to be the subject of ridicule, however true the cause. I purpose to attend to-morrow, if my business will permit, and, as Mrs. Greene is waiting, will add no more, only that I am, with great truth, your sincere friend."

How the matter was finally arranged is no longer known, beyond the simple fact that he remained in the company as a private. There was still another practical difficulty: where should he find a musket? for already muskets and military accoutrements of all kinds were hard to get. He resolved to go to Boston, where his business relations, although it was the first year of the Port Bill, would afford a sufficient pretext for a visit. It is probable that he took lodgings at the "Bunch of Grapes," on the little square in front of Faneuil Hall. If we bear in mind his position in the Legislature, we shall see that he would hardly be in Boston at such a time without endeavoring to exchange opinions with the leaders of the popular party. He may have met Sam Adams and War-

ren, and discussed with them the chances of that army of twenty thousand men which Massachusetts had just asked Rhode Island to join with New Hampshire and Connecticut in helping her raise, and Josiah Quincy's pamphlet, and that little close-printed quarto of sixteen pages which told what the General Congress of Philadelphia had done. It is as certain as tradition can make it, that he went more than once to Knox's bookstore. It is positively known that he attended the morning and evening parades of the British troops, looking at them sternly from under the broad brim of his Quaker hat with those keen eyes which, before another twelvemonth was passed, were to look at them more sternly still from under the cocked hat of a brigadier-general. And then, having bought a musket, and engaged a British deserter to go back with him as drill-master to the "Guards," he prevailed upon a farmer to hide his musket in his cart, and, following him at a cautious distance, set out upon his journey homeward. Once over the Roxbury lines, he would breathe freely; but when, a few months later, he heard poor Ditson's¹ story, he must have recalled his own adventure with something more than self-congratulation. In a few days he appeared on parade with his drill-master and his musket; and still in the old homestead, where he was born and grew up to full manhood, that musket has its place on the wall, and is reverentially preserved in memory of him.

¹ Who was tarred and feathered for buying one. See Force, Am. Archives, 4th Series, Vol. II. p. 83.

CHAPTER V.

Inner Life. — Mental Culture. — How and what he studied. — His Library. — Study of Composition. — Letters to S. Ward, Jr. — Quaker Prejudices against Literature. — Glimpses of his Daily Life and Habits. — Forge burned. — A Lottery. — Letter to William Greene. — Asthma. — In Love. — Why he loved S. Ward. — S. Ward's Sister. — Progress of the Dispute with England. — Greene resolves to take up Arms. — Read out of the Meeting. — Threatened Accusation. — Military Reading. — Rhode Island College. — Courtship and Marriage. — Domestic Life. — Rapid Development of Public Opinion. — Tea burned in Market Square, Providence. — Battle of Lexington. — March of Kentish Guards. — Assembly meets. — Army of Observation. — Mission to Connecticut. — Greene chosen Brigadier-General. — Commission. — Farewell Letter to his Wife.

BUT, side by side with this out-of-door life, in the eye of his little world, Greene was living a thoughtful inner life, which few in that world could appreciate or understand. From the time when his literary curiosity had first been awakened by his conversation with Giles he had resolved to make the cultivation of his mind a part of his daily work. The long evenings of winter, and early rising all the year round, gave him hours and half-hours which amounted to days in the course of the month, and he turned them all to account. Some time, too, as I have already said, he gained during his working hours by still keeping his book at hand, to be taken up, though but for a moment,

while the iron was heating, or for freer use while the corn was passing from the hopper.

In this way he had gradually mastered Euclid and Locke; the frequent interruptions serving only to make him think more closely, and weigh every idea and principle more carefully, before it took its appropriate place in his mind. Thus his mode of reading became very deliberate, and being prevented both by the turn of his mind and his slender stock of books from reading for excitement, he would read the same book over and over again, returning to it with unpalled appetite, until he had made himself thoroughly master of its contents. And thus, too, his knowledge, instead of floating loosely upon the surface of his mind, permeated every part of it, and became a substantial thing, over which his control was absolute. And hence, in after years, it was a saying, among those who knew him best, that nobody could get the substance out of a book as he could.¹

It was not, however, without the constant exertion of a strong will that he could carry his studies beyond Barclay and Fox, much less enter those profane regions where wit and poetry spread their snares for heedless feet. Of his father's prejudices I have already spoken; and it was not till

¹ This has often been told me by my grandaunt, Mary Ward, sister of Greene's first love, and of his early friend, Samuel Ward. The reader will pardon me if I add, that I cannot write the name of this excellent woman without a longing to ac- knowledge how much I owe to her tenderness for the happiness of my early years, and to her sound, clear mind for my comprehension of the feelings and sentiments of our Revolution.

he grew up to man's estate that he became wholly free to follow his natural bent and indulge a wider range of study, and not until he had a house of his own that he could make a library a part of its furniture. Then the pleasant little northeast room that looks down the meadow to the river was chosen for a study; and, on walls covered with the miscellaneous contents of a country store, a few shelves were set apart for his books. By degrees the number rose to two hundred and fifty well-chosen volumes, the wonder of the country round, and which doubtless made even some of his friends, as they thought of the precious dollars that had been given for them, shake their heads gravely, and say, "You never can read them all!" There was Euclid, his early teacher, who had given him his first consciousness of a firm grasp upon scientific truth. There were the four thick octavos of the *Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, answering hundreds of the questions that crowded upon his mind, and illustrating its answers, when they were susceptible of illustration, by elaborate engravings. He had paid "four pounds lawful" for them; but it was not by pounds and shillings that the pleasure and profit he had derived from them could be estimated. There was John Mair's "*Book-keeping Methodized*," with a dictionary of commercial terms, and an appendix full of valuable information about the Colonial trade,—lessons gratefully remembered when the complicated questions and accounts of the quartermaster-general's department

came up before him. There were Locke's *Essay* and Butler's *Analogy*. There, high in place, were the four beautiful quartos of Blackstone from the Oxford press, and near them an Edinburgh quarto, with leaves often and thoughtfully turned, Ferguson's *Essay on Civil Society*,—a work little read now, but which was held in that day to have “a great deal of genius and fine writing.”¹ Beccaria's golden treatise, the first application of a humane philosophy to the theory of crimes and punishments, was there also. Were not Montesquieu and Burlamaqui, and Puffendorf and Vattel, and Hume's essays close by its side? I do not know positively, though I know that a few years later he had read Vattel and Hume; and he could hardly have seen the names of the others recurring so often, in books which he is known to have read, without feeling a strong desire to read them too. His Roman history was Rollin, with engravings facing the title-page; young Pompey leading his horse before the censors; Regulus tearing himself from the arms of his wife and children; Cæsar sinking under the dagger which Brutus, with averted head, thrusts into his bosom. His English history was Rapin; his rhetoric and literature, Rollin in four duodecimos. There was Cæsar “Englished by Duncan,” and Horace by Smart. There was Pope's Homer, and Pope's own poems, and the *Spectator*, and Swift, whose terse simplicity he had early learned to admire, and *Tristram Shandy*, whom he often

¹ Hume to Robertson, May 29, 1759. Stewart's *Life of Robertson*.

quotes, and whose Dr. Slop he loved to impersonate to the great amusement of his brothers. And in most of these books, on a fly-leaf or the title-page, was written *Nathanael Greene's*, in a bold, round hand, which a schoolmaster might have envied, but which was to lose itself almost in a swift running-hand when thoughts crowded his pen, and expresses, booted and spurred, waited to convey his orders.

How soon he began to use his pen as a means of culture I have no way of ascertaining. The earliest specimens of his writings that have been preserved are his letters to Samuel Ward, Jr., a son of the Governor, beginning shortly after his removal to Coventry, and coming down to the middle of 1774. Some of these are regular studies of composition; showing less, however, the progress he had made as a writer than the subjects to which he had turned his thoughts, and the opinions he had formed upon them. In one of these letters he traces our actions to "self-love" as "the primary mover and first principle of them all," attributing the "hazardous actions of great and exalted spirits" "for the good of others" to the "passion of glory," and the "generous benevolence of worthy minds in the domestic way of life" to the "greater happiness" which the gratification of their benevolence affords them.

In a comparison between town and country life, he unconsciously gives us a pleasant glimpse of his own way of enjoying life in the country. Town

life reminds him of a cloudy sky, country life of a clear one, each acting upon the other by a law of "necessary succession"; but country life, in which "nature seems to move gently on, undisturbed by noise and tumult," affords an opportunity of "contemplating her order and beauty until we arrive at that pitch of knowledge and understanding that the God of nature has qualified us to soar to."

He defines "virtuous manners as such acquired habits of thought and correspondent actions as lead to the steady prosecution of the general welfare of society. Virtuous principles are such as tend to confirm those habits by superinducing the idea of duty." "Virtuous manners" he holds to be "a permanent foundation for civil liberty, because they lead the passions and desires themselves to coincide with the appointments of civil law." He speaks of benevolence, "What shall I say to you of benevolence? The example of God teacheth the lesson truly." He speaks of friendship, and finds its "principal fruit in the ease and discharge of the swelling of the heart." "The pursuit of virtue where there is no opposition," he regards as "the merit of a common man; but to practise it in spite of all opposition is the character of a truly great and noble soul." Sometimes his sentiments assume the form of friendly suggestion. "It is very fortunate for you to be able to enumerate a long train of noble ancestors, but to equal the best and excel the most is to have no occasion for any. . . . He that enters in life with

all the advantages of a noble birth, adorned with a liberal education and improved by the most pious example, cannot be excused short of an improvement proportionate to the opportunity given. Learn, my friend, to distinguish between true and false modesty. What I call false modesty is not to have resolution to deny an unreasonable request or power to oppose a corrupt custom. Have you not felt, on seeing or reading of noble deeds or generous actions, pleasant emotions mixt with the desire of imitation? These are the advantages that spring from choice books and the best of company. They inspire the mind to action, and direct the passions."

Sometimes his thoughts, dwelling upon the bright prospects of his young friend, revert with a dignified consciousness to his own position. "I hope one day to see you shine like a star of the first magnitude, all glorious both evening and morning. I lament the want of liberal education. I feel the mist of ignorance to surround me. I was educated a Quaker, and amongst the most superstitious sort; and that of itself is enough to cramp the best of geniuses, much more mine. This constrained manner of educating their youth has proved a fine nursery of ignorance and superstition instead of piety, and has laid a foundation for farce instead of worship."

He then goes on to show that "it was not the original intention of the Friends to prevent the propagation of useful literature in the Church, but

only to prohibit their youth from reading such books as may make them fools by industry"; that "they considered youth to be the great opportunity of life, which settles or fixes most men in a good or bad course"; that, falling upon an age of priestcraft, they were disgusted with a system of education the only aim of which was to "cultivate the youthful mind to be subservient to the after-views" of the priesthood, and failing to distinguish "where the evil lay," and, arguing "from the abuse to the disuse of the thing," they confounded literature with a "vain philosophy," and while they aimed only "to lop off the dead branches," superstition and ignorance, creeping in, "increased into the decay of learning. . . . This, my dear friend, was the foundation of my education."

It is this feeling, perhaps, that prevents him from speaking often of books, although a mention of them now and then creeps in. "I have been reading," he writes, July 21, 1773, "Butler's Analogy between Natural and Revealed Religion." Sometimes his reading furnishes him with a simile, "Griffin pursued him through Connecticut as Death did Tristram Shandy through France." Sometimes with a quotation, "I conclude with the contents of one of Seneca's letters, 'I am well, I hope you are well, farewell.'" Once there is an attempt at humor. He sends out an imaginary messenger to see what his friend "Sam" is a doing; and, after some hesitation, the messenger says: "Why, then, — if — if I must, I will. I found him out in the

woods the back of the house with his winter shoes on, new modelling his bow agreeably to the Boston plan. He had scraped up the earth as you have seen stray cattle when they meet, and was all besmeared with the dust he had raised ; he looked like the miller in the farce." The drama, if we may judge by this allusion, had attracted some share of his attention. Once only does he quote poetry. A "once celebrated" belle had paid him a visit. She was in declining health. "She appears," he writes, "like a gaudy flower nipt by the pinching frost. I fancy she is not long for this world. Though she flies swiftly on the wings of wild desire for matrimony.

"How rich, how valued once avails thee not ;
To whom related or by whom begot.
A heap of dust alone remains of thee,
'T is all thou art, and all the proud shall be."

In these transcripts of his mind he gives us occasional glimpses of himself from other points of view. "I have been to meeting to-day," he writes, of a Sunday afternoon ; "our silence was interrupted by a vain, conceited minister. His sermon made me think of a certain diet called Whistle-Belly vengeance ; he that eats most has the worst share. He began by asking what could be said that had not been said : 'Much more,' thinks I, 'than you ever thought or ever will.' Poor man ! he had a little morsel to comfort himself, and he could n't be contented to eat it alone, but, feeling the springs of benevolence rise up in his mind, he thought it

his duty to make a distribution among the whole congregation. The assembly was so large and the matter so light that it evaporated like smoke, and left us neither the fuller nor the better pleased than when he began."

Another day he was more fortunate. "There has been a famous preacher at Greenwich. He is a gentleman of elevated faculties, a fine speaker, and appears by his language to be a lover of mankind."

Sometimes we meet a passage that gives us a morning glance into his room; as Cicero's *hæc ante diluculum scripsi*¹ does into the early hours of the great orator. "Day stands tiptoe, and the rays of the sun begin to gild the tops of the highest hills and tallest trees," he writes in August, 1772; and sometimes a glance which shows that, with all his love of books and application to business, he loved a hearty merry-making still. "I am just returned from Mr. Benjamin Gardener's wedding," he writes from Potowomut in January, 1774. "We kept it up three or four days. . . . The bride was dressed in a corded lutestring gown, flounced and furbelowed in high taste; her head was dressed in a laced fly, long lappets —" and then suddenly checking his pen, as if conscious that he was beyond his depth, he adds, "the rest of the head-dress was of a piece, which I leave to your imagination to frame, as I am no great connoisseur in female furniture, and am at a loss for a name to convey my

¹ I wrote this before dawn.

idéas. The bride looked rich, but not neat; amiable, but not handsome. So much for the wedding." And passing to "snow-storm upon snow-storm; all the face of the earth is covered with virgin snow," he closes with another unconscious revelation of character, showing how strong his local attachments were, and what a hold the old homestead had upon his affections. "Although it (the snow) is deep and difficult to get abroad, yet I can't confine myself long from Potowomut, where we appear as the people of old did that went into the ark, male and female."

In the summer of 1772, August 17, the forge at Coventry was burnt down. Lotteries were the insurance companies of that day, and the Legislature was petitioned for a lottery. Lest any one should feel inclined to tax the Greenes with gambling, let it be remembered that school-houses and churches were built and repaired by the same means, and that even private individuals felt authorized to have recourse to them for the reparation of private losses.

"Whereas," say the records, "John Greene & Company, and Griffin Greene all of Coventry; and Nathaniel Greene & Company preferred a petition, and represented unto this Assembly that, on the night of the 17th instant, the buildings of the forge in said Coventry, of which they were owners, were entirely consumed by fire; that the loss is so great that they cannot repair it without assistance; that some of them are considerably indebted, have in-

creasing families to maintain, and by the said misfortune are deprived of their principal dependence ; that although they the petitioners are the immediate sufferers, yet many others must consequently share in the calamity, as a considerable part of the country adjacent were employed by means of said forge, which also furnished a very material and expensive article for shipping ; and that, if the said forge be not repaired, the anchor works, which still remain, will be in a manner useless ; and thereupon prayed this Assembly to grant them a lottery to raise the sum of \$ 2,500 under the direction of Messrs. William Greene, Christopher Greene, and Charles Holden, they giving bond for the faithful performance of the said trust ; on consideration whereof

“ Be it enacted by this General Assembly and by the authority thereof it is enacted, that the aforesaid petition be, and the same is hereby granted.”¹

Two years later Nathaniel Greene & Company relinquished their interest in the lottery, which by a new act, in compliance with a new petition, was made over to Griffin Greene, whose name we shall often meet as a favorite cousin of the General.² A letter to William Greene gives the story from another point of view.

“ COVENTRY, August 23, 1772.

“ News of our misfortune in the destruction of the forge doubtless will reach you before this. We have made ap-

¹ Bartlett, R. I. Records, Vol. VII. stated in the text, see the same vol. p. 52. For numerous instances of same, *passim*.
similar grants, to the full extent ² Records *ut sup.* 242.

plication to the General Assembly for a lottery, which have obtained a grant of. You, Mr. Christopher Greene, and Charles Holden, are appointed directors. I must entreat you to accept of that trust, lest it should defeat the whole scheme. I am confident the satisfaction of assisting the unfortunate will give you as much pleasure as will balance the trouble and difficulty you 'll experience upon the occasion. I urge it more on my uncle and Griffin's account than our own ; and had it not been for them we had not adopted this method to recover part of our loss, but the injury was too great for them to recover themselves without the aid and assistance of their friends. The loss is much greater in its consequences to us than it would be in its own nature, for uncle's loss is our loss, for this unhappy affair will put it out of his power to pay us our demands for some time, if ever he gets able." ¹

Thus much for the lottery, which I have thought too interesting an illustration of ninety years ago to be passed over in silence.

" I have had a most severe turn of the phthisic or asthma," the letter continues ; " I have not slept six hours in four nights, being obliged to sit up the two last nights. I hope you and your family enjoy a better state of health. If ever I felt the benefit of philosophy it has been upon this occasion, for I felt as calm and as contented as old Socrates when condemned unjustly by the Athenians."

This is the first mention of a disease which stuck to him through life ; and if we feel a smile stealing

¹ I am indebted for the original of this letter to Lieutenant-Governor William Greene, the grandson of the William to whom it was written. All the parts of the sheet originally

left in blank are covered with memorandum of names and numbers, showing how industriously the trust was fulfilled.

to our lips at the self-congratulatory comparison with Socrates, we may remember that Greene was not a mere disclaimer, trying to embellish a sentence, but a student of real life, trying to form himself for its duties by the example of great men.

A few days after the fire he wrote to Samuel Ward: "Your letter reached me the morning after the destruction of the forge. I sat upon the remains of one of the old shafts and read it. I was surrounded with gloomy faces, piles of timber still in flames, heaps of bricks dasht to pieces, bushels of coal reduced to ashes; — everything seemed to appear in ruin and confusion." The letter troubled him too. Some expressions in one of his own letters had been misunderstood, and his young friend had been wounded by them. "I read over your letter once or twice," Greene writes, "before I could satisfy myself whether the surprise I felt was the effect of the loss, or from the contents of the letter." He defends himself warmly; but a sweet tone of affection runs through his defence, and, withdrawing for a moment the veil of his feelings, he confesses that "a contest has been going on in his bosom, that his breast has been like a theatre of strife and a field of battle, where reason and passion contend with various successes of power and victory." If we would know why he was thus "at variance" with himself, and continually "torn and distracted with civil feuds of his own disturbed imagination" we must go a little more into detail and withdraw the veil still further.

There were many things in young Samuel Ward to draw Greene towards him, notwithstanding the fourteen years' difference in their ages. Nature had given him fine talents. The happy fortune of his birth had brought him early into contact with cultivated men. He laid the foundation of his education betimes, graduating at Rhode Island College on its third commencement, and with high honors, although not yet turned of sixteen. As he came out into life it was seen that sound principles, force of will, self-control, and generous sentiments formed a part of that education; exalted, all of them, by an honorable ambition, and vivified by a dash of bold enterprise. How resolutely he bore the privations of the march through the wilderness, how bravely he fought under the walls of Quebec, how gallantly he faced the Hessians at Red Bank, how adventurously, when the war was ended, he carried the flag of the new republic into the China seas, with what placid serenity he returned to the plough when his midday was passed, closing the active portion of his long career amid the woods and fields, cheerfully sowing where his hand might not be permitted to garner, and planting trees whose fruit he could never hope to see, are things which it is not now my office to tell. But I cannot write his name upon the same page with that of my grandfather, without recalling, as if it were but of yesterday, the reverence with which, thirty years ago, and with eyes already accustomed to look upon historical

men, I looked upon his venerable form as bent, but not broken by age, he would talk to me of Horace, his daily companion, or, at my urgent request, call forth from his faithful memory some pleasing recollection of the friend of his youth.

And now, if we bear in mind Greene's political ties, we shall see how naturally his relations with the father would ripen into still closer relations with the son. And if we remember the longing with which he looked to the intellectual "Canaan" amid whose pleasant places his young friend was roaming at will, while his own feet, like those of "Moses of old," were stayed by the waters of "Jordan," we shall see how much this intimate connection with one so highly favored must have appeared to him like standing on the brink of the stream, and catching a breath from the hallowed region beyond.

But besides all this, Samuel Ward had a sister who was exceeding fair in the eyes of his friend; a maiden in whom all the noble instincts of the father and brother looked out through soft eyes of bluish gray, strengthening the harmony of well-matched features, deepening at times the tints upon rosy cheeks, and imparting dignity to a form which, although not above the middle size, was full of symmetry and grace. In the intimacy of country life, Greene had seen her grow up from girlhood to womanhood, and learned as he talked with her and looked upon her to give her his love.

But she could only give him friendship in return, and for a long while the alternations of hope and fear, the effort to awaken a warmer feeling, and the growing consciousness that his efforts were vain, seem to have "overwhelmed" him as they have overwhelmed the lovers of all generations with "agreeable distress and pleasant pains." And this it was that made him feel "at variance with himself"; and the meditative habits which his natural disposition and his mode of life encouraged must have greatly contributed to increase and prolong the agitation.

It was fortunate for him that just at this time public questions began to demand a larger share of his attention. The dispute with England was rapidly assuming a more decided form, and making it necessary for men of all classes to choose their side in the approaching contest. For Greene this decision involved another decision, which he could not make without pain, although he made it without hesitation. He saw that nothing but a resolute appeal to arms could save the colonies from absolute subjection to the royal prerogative. He felt that his country had the same right to his services in the field which he had recognized as her unquestionable right in the council-chamber. But he knew that he could not take a sword in his hand without exposing himself to be cast out from the religious society with which he had lived in unbroken harmony from his earliest childhood. Amid the little nameless mounds that dotted the

greensward on the west side of the Quaker meeting-house, there was one which he knew to be the grave of his mother, and by the same path by which, when but a boy of ten, he had followed her body to its resting-place, he had in riper years followed two brothers and his father to their places by her side. How could he cut himself off from a seat in the building in which he had so often listened to his father's voice, and his right to a grave in a spot consecrated by the graves of father and mother and brothers?

His heart was tender, and his personal and local attachments strong; but he took his resolution deliberately, and ever after abided firmly by it. Yet although from the first his sentiments must have been known to the "meeting," and consequently condemned, it was not till he had made a public profession of them by attending a military parade at Plainfield, near the Rhode Island border, that it took public notice of them. Then says the record:—

"At our monthly meeting, held at Cranston on the 5th of seventh month, 1773. . . . Whereas, this meeting is informed that Nathanael and Griffin Greene have (been) at a place in Connecticut of public resort where they had no proper business, therefore this meeting appoints Ephraim Congdon, Jared Greene, and Cary Spencer to make inquiry into the matter, and to make report at our next monthly meeting."

And when the next meeting came together, it

was further resolved: "At our monthly meeting at East Greenwich y^e 2d of the eighth month, 1773, The committee appointed to inquire into the conduct of Nathanael Greene and Griffin Greene report that they have had no opportunity with them as yet. Therefore it is continued to our next monthly meeting."

There was an evident reluctance to proceed to extremities against the son and nephew of an eminent preacher. The next meeting was held at "Cranston on y^e 6th day of y^e ninth month," and still the blow was suspended. "In the matter referred to this meeting concerning Nathanael Greene and Griffin Greene, the committee report that they have treated with them, but they have given no satisfaction as yet. Whereupon this meeting continues it once more, and desires the clerk to inform them of the same."

Another month passes, both parties meeting constantly the while in the pursuit of their customary avocations. The next meeting is held at East Greenwich, in the very building wherein for almost thirty years his face had been one of the most familiar, and there on "y^e 30th day of y^e ninth month" the clerk writes with reluctant pen,—"The matter referred to this meeting concerning Nathanael Greene and Griffin Greene, as they have not given this meeting any satisfaction for their outgoing and misconduct, therefore this meeting doth put them from under the care of the meeting until they make satisfaction for their misconduct,

and appoint John Greene to inform them of the same.”¹

Already this same year he had been menaced with a more dangerous accusation. “One of the *Gaspee*’s people has sworn against me as being concerned in the destruction of her. . . . I should be tempted to let the sun shine through him if I could come at him,” he writes Samuel Ward. The idea of being “called to the bar as a criminal,” in such a cause, has its ludicrous side also. “Would it not make you laugh,” he writes, “to see the Colonel stand in that attitude?”

And now military books began to make their appearance on his shelves, purchased, most of them, an authentic tradition says, at the bookstore of Henry Knox, whom he had known thus far only as a bookseller, but whom he was soon to meet in camp, and to live with throughout the rest of his life as a cherished friend. Then came the organization of the *Kentish Guards*. His separation from the Quakers was complete and irrevocable.

One more trace of his interest in another class of questions remains. Rhode Island College had been established in 1764 (February 27), and gave promise of becoming an important institution. There was still, however, as late as 1770 (February 7), an uncertainty about the best place for a permanent location; all the principal towns of the

¹ MSS. records. I am indebted for my friend and schoolmate, James H. my copy of the passages in the text to Eldridge, M.D., of East Greenwich.

State claiming it on the ground of peculiar local advantages. Greene took an active part in the discussion, advocating the claims of East Greenwich.¹

Ere long another decisive change in his personal condition followed. Just where the hill on whose eastern slope East Greenwich is built begins to fall away on the west towards a deep and smiling valley stands the house of Governor Greene,—a large house for the early Colonial days in which it was built, and to whose unadorned walls association still gives such an air of simple dignity that you instinctively pause and look around you before you cross the threshold; for there are few of Rhode Island's great men who have not crossed it, and in its little southwest parlor, whose western window overlooks the valley, Franklin loved to sit and look upon the pleasant landscape. But it was not to sit where Franklin had sat, or even to discuss, with the future governor, the anxious questions of the day, that Greene stopped so often and so long in his frequent passings by. But that little parlor was lighted now by eyes of bluish gray, which smiled upon him till he forgot in whom he had first learned to love such eyes, and a form light and agile in his favorite dance, and a merry laugh from dewy lips, and a lively wit, and a heart all ready to meet his own in equal exchange.

¹ Guild's History of Brown University. The history of the location and important work of this institution is one of the most

The maiden's name was Catherine Littlefield, and she was a niece of the governor's wife, the Catherine Ray of Franklin's letters. The courtship sped swiftly and smoothly; and more than once, in the course of it, he followed her to Block Island, where, as long after, her sister told me, the time passed gleefully in merry-makings, of which dancing always formed a principal part. And, on the 12th of July, 1774, it was certified, under the hand of David Sprague, Clerke, "to all whom it may concern That The intention of marriage was Published in the congregation assembled For Divine Worship in Newshoreham meeting-house Three days of Publick Worship Between Mr. Nathanael Greene of Coventry in the County of Kint and Catharine Littlefield a Daughter of John Littlefield Esq. at Newshoreham in the county of Newport and no objection was made to forbid their marriage." On the same days, the worshippers at the "Episcopal Church at Providence" received a similar notice, as is testified, in a clear, copy-book hand, by the rector, J. Greaves. And a third certificate being given, on the 18th, by Stephen Arnold, Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas, the requisitions of law and custom were fulfilled. Already, on the 10th, he had written:—

"FRIEND SAMUEL, — Please to deliver the enclosed cards to your sisters. On the 20th this instant, I expect to be married to Miss Kitty Littlefield, at your uncle Greene's. As a relation of hers, and friend of mine, your company will be required on that occasion."

But a sterner note mingles menacingly with the marriage-bell. "The soldiers in Boston," he goes on to say, "are insolent above measure. Soon, very soon, I expect to hear the thirsty earth drinking in the warm blood of American sons. Oh, how my eyes flash with indignation, and my bosom burns with holy resentment! . . . O Boston! Boston! would to heaven that the good angel that destroyed the army of Sennacherib might now interpose, and rid you of your oppressors! How is the design of government subverted!"

The 20th of July came, and in the little room hallowed by the recollections of Franklin Greene received the hand of his bride; and then, through those green roads and lanes, which looked greener and lovelier than ever before, he led her home to Coventry.

Time now passed swiftly. Public life and private life crowded close upon each other. His forge, his books, the society of his wife, were occupation enough for one whom ambition had scarcely touched, and whose thoughts had never wandered far from his paternal fields. But the legislature met often, and each session brought up questions of great moment. Solomon Southwick, of Newport, had just published Lord Somers's "Judgment of whole Kingdoms and Nations concerning the Rights, Powers, and Prerogatives of Kings, and the Rights, Privileges, and Properties of the People"; and as the legislators of Rhode Island read this inculcation of the duty of "resisting evil and de-

structive princes," they felt their own resolution strengthened, and saw the path of duty grow plainer to their eyes. All began to feel that "the time (was) near approaching when (they) must gird on (their) swords, and ride forth to meet their enemies."¹ Greene's feelings toward the ministry find their way into his letters to his wife. "Remember me to the Doctor, and tell him if he don't make a perfect cure, or lay a good foundation for it, I'll put him on board of a man-of-war, and send him to England to be tryed for the heinous offence of disaffection to Arbitrary Government and Ministerial tyranny." It is from such letters that we learn what the habitual tone of his conversation must have been. The drills of militia and independent companies continued. The calls for arms became constant, and manufactories sprang up in different parts of the State to answer them. The action of Congress was approved in an extra session of the Assembly.² Committees of inspection were on the alert. All eyes were turned anxiously towards Boston. Money and provisions were sent to the inhabitants, already straitened by the Port Bill.³ In December, as we have already seen, Fort George was dismantled, and the cannon secured for the use of the Colony.⁴ The use of tea was

¹ Extract from a letter from a gentleman in Connecticut, published in Force's Archives.

² R. I. Records, Vol. VII. p. 263.

³ See, among others, the East Greenwich resolutions, drawn by

Greene's friend, Varnum. Bartlett R. I. Rec., Vol. VII. p. 303.

⁴ "Six twenty-four-pounders, eighteen eighteen-pounders, fourteen sixteen-pounders, and six four-pounders." Captain Wallace to Admiral Graves,

suspended. "We will have nothing to do with the East India Company's irksome tea, nor any other subject to the like duty," say the Middletown resolvest.¹ At Providence, "about twelve o'clock at noon, the town-crier" passed through the town, giving notice, "At five o'clock this afternoon, a quantity of India tea will be burnt in the market-place. All true friends of their country, lovers of freedom and haters of shackles and handcuffs, are hereby invited to testify their good disposition, by bringing in and casting into the fire a needless herb which for a long time hath been highly detrimental to our liberty, interest, and health." About three hundred pounds were burnt "by the firm contenders for the true interest of America. A tar-barrel, Lord North's speech, Rivington's and Mill's and Hicks's newspapers and divers other ingredients were also added, many worthy women making a free-will offering of their respective stocks of the hurtful trash. On this occasion the bells were tolled; but it is referred to the learned whether tolling or ringing would have been most proper. Whilst the tea was burning a spirited son of liberty went along the streets with his brush and lamp-black, and obliterated or unpainted the word tea on the shop signs."

This was in March, 1775;² and these anxieties and preparations of feeling went on gaining

Dec. 12, 1774. R. I. Rec., Vol. VII. p. 306. Wallace's letter is a good illustration of the feeling on both sides. How differently the name sounds in Scottish history and in American!

¹ Arnold's Rhode' Island, Vol. II. p. 330.

² Force's Am. Archives, 4th Series, Vol. II. p. 15; also Arnold's Rhode Island, Vol. II. p. 345.

strength through the first weeks of April. Then, on the afternoon of the 19th, a messenger fresh from the field reached Providence, with tidings that the regulars and the colonists were fighting at Lexington. The news passed quickly from mouth to mouth, each new narrator giving it the coloring of his own mind. "War, war, boys!" John Howland heard one man say: "there is war; the regulars have marched out of Boston; a great many men are killed; war, war, boys!"¹ Men gathered in groups on the parade, inquiring the news, the officers of the four independent companies among them. The drum beat to arms. It was sundown before the men could be all got together, and then Sessions, the Lieutenant-Governor, would not hearken to their earnest appeals for marching orders. Wanton, the Governor, lived at Newport, thirty miles off. Without orders, the officers were reluctant to march, for they knew that their legal authority would cease the moment they crossed the boundary line; and, true Anglo-Saxons, even in this uprising which strict law would have called rebellion, they would feign have preserved the forms of law. Adopting, therefore, a middle course, they despatched an express to Boston, resolved, if they were needed, to march without taking further thought of the Governor's consent.

Meanwhile, the tidings passed on, from farm-house to farm-house, from town to town. It was

¹ Stone's Howland, p. 40.

already night when they reached Greene at Coventry; but he instantly mounted his horse, and hurried off to the alarm-post of the Kentish Guards, at Greenwich, stopping at the house of a friend named Madison,— who still, in my early manhood, lived to tell the story,— to borrow a few dollars in hard money. The Guards set out by dawn, with Varnum at their head. It was early in the morning when they passed through Providence. “I viewed the company as they marched up the street,” said John Howland, “and observed Nathaniel Greene, with his musket on his shoulder, in the ranks, as a private. I distinguished Mr. Greene, whom I had frequently seen, by the motion of his shoulder in the march, as one of his legs was shorter than the other.”¹ It was the stiffness in his knee which gave him that halt in his gait, and the musket on his shoulder was the English musket he had bought in Boston. At Pawtucket, just as they were crossing the line, a messenger from the Tory Governor, Wanton, overtook them, with orders to turn back. The company obeyed; but Greene, procuring a horse, pushed on with three companions, two of them his brothers. On the way, messengers met them with information that the British troops had been driven into Boston.

On the 22d, the Assembly met at Providence, and “Voted and resolved, that fifteen hundred men be enlisted, raised, and embodied, as aforesaid,

¹ Stone’s Howland, *ut sup.*

with all the expedition and despatch that the thing will admit of." This little army was to serve at home as an army of observation, "and also, if it be necessary for the safety and preservation of any of the Colonies, to march out of this Colony, and join and co-operate with the forces of the neighboring Colonies." In the same session, "a committee was appointed to wait upon the General Assembly of Connecticut to consult with them upon measures for the common defence of the four New England Colonies, and that they make report to this Assembly at the next session." Samuel Ward and William Bradford were made the committee; and Ward, being unable to serve, on account of his duties as delegate to Congress, "It (was) voted and resolved, that M^r. Nathanael Greene be, and he is hereby, appointed" in his place.

In the following week the Assembly met again, not at Newport, as they should have done, but, for greater security, at Providence; and, promptly meeting the great question of the hour, proceeded to organize their army of observation. The number, as we have already seen, was fixed at fifteen hundred men. These were now "formed into one brigade, under the command of a brigadier-general," the brigade to be "divided into three regiments, each of which shall be commanded by one colonel, one lieutenant-colonel, and one major, . . . each regiment to consist of eight companies," — one of the companies to be "a train of artillery and have the use of the Colony's field-

pieces." Then passing to the choice of officers, the name of Nathanael Greene was placed first on the list as brigadier-general.

As we look at this choice from our present point of view, we are instinctively led to class it among those events wherein human wisdom, recognizing its own weakness, seeks for the explanation of its impulses in a direct interposition of an overruling Providence. But there were human causes also, and we cannot but long to know them. Greene had never held a military commission. The Colony had its militia organization and its major-general, Simeon Potter. Why not choose for the responsible office a man of military associations? Varnum, the colonel of the Kentish Guards, was a brilliant and popular man. Why go to his ranks for a brigadier-general? We find Greene employed, it is true, in the revisal of the militia laws, and on the mission to Connecticut, in which military organization would be more or less fully discussed. It is probable, also, that his late military reading had given precision and distinctness to his language upon military questions. Still, the main clew escapes us, although I cannot but feel that something was owing to his personal relations with Governor Ward. There is a tradition, but I will not vouch for it, that the first choice fell upon an Episcopalian, who declined; the second, on a Congregationalist, who also declined; and that, when the third vote was announced as having fallen on Greene, he rose in his place, and said: "Since the

Episcopalian and Congregationalist won't, I suppose the Quaker must."

Wanton, though re-elected Governor in spite of his Tory proclivities, having failed to qualify, Henry Ward, Secretary of the Colony, was "authorized and fully empowered to sign the commissions of all officers civil and military, receiving therefor, out of the general treasury, two shillings and eight pence for each commission."¹ And accordingly, on the 8th of May, 1775, impressing Rhode Island's anchor on the left-hand corner of an open sheet of common foolscap, he wrote in a clear and beautiful hand :—

"By the Honorable the General Assembly of the English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England in America.

"To NATHANIEL GREENE, Esquire,

Greeting :

"Whereas, for the Preservation of the Rights and Liberties of His Majesty's loyal and faithful Subjects in this Colony and America, the aforesaid General Assembly have ordered Fifteen Hundred Men to be inlisted and embodied into an Army of Observation, and to be formed into one Brigade under the command of a Brigadier-General, and have appointed you the said Nathaniel Greene Brigadier-General of the said Army of Observation : You are, therefore, hereby in His Majesty's Name George the Third, by the Grace of God King of Great Britain, &c., authorized, empowered, and commissioned to have, take, and exercise the Office of Brigadier-General of the said Army of Observation, and to command, guide, and conduct the same, or

¹ For these statements generally, see Bartlett, *ut sup.*, Vol. VII.

any Part thereof. And in Case of Invasion or Assault of a Common Enemy, to disturb this or any other of His Majesty's Colonies in America, you are to alarm and gather together the Army under your Command, or any Part thereof, as you shall deem sufficient, and therewith to the utmost of your Skill and Ability you are to resist, expel, kill, and destroy them in Order to preserve the Interest of His Majesty and His good Subjects in these Parts. You are also to follow such instructions, Directions, and Orders as shall from Time to Time be given forth, either by the General Assembly or your superior Officers. And for your so doing this Commission shall be your sufficient Warrant.

“By Virtue of an Act of the said General Assembly, I, Henry Ward, Esq^r, Secretary of the said Colony, have hereunto set my Hand and the seal of the said Colony this Eighth Day of May, A. D. 1775, and in the Fifteenth Year of His said Majesty's Reign.

“HENRY WARD.”¹

Details of organization and preparation followed. There were questions to arrange with the government, and, at the last moment, with the Committee of Safety. His private affairs, too, might have claimed some share of his attention, but he threw them upon his brothers; and never, from that moment, gave them more than a cursory glance. There were little details, however, which he did not forget, and, among them, to direct James Gould, of Newport, who had made him many a suit of drab, to make him a suit of uniform, and “send it to Cambridge by Wednesday.”

¹ From the original among the Greene papers.

And then, on the 2d of June, he wrote his wife from Providence :—

“ MY DEAR WIFE,—I am this moment going to set off for camp, having been detained by the Committee of Safety till now. I have recommended you to the care of my brethren ; direct your conduct by their advice, unless they should so far forget their affection for me as to request anything unworthy of you to comply with. In that case, maintain your own independence until my return, which, if Providence allows, I will see justice done you ; but I have no reason to think but that you ’ll be very kindly and affectionately treated in my absence. I have not so much in my mind that wounds my peace, as the separation from you. My bosom is knitted to yours by all the gentle feelings that inspire the softest sentiments of conjugal love. It had been happy for me if I could have lived a private life in peace and plenty, enjoying all the happiness that results from a well-tempered society, founded on mutual esteem. The social feelings that accompanies such an intercourse is a faint emblem of the divine saints inhabiting eternity. But the injury done my country, and the chains of slavery forging for posterity, calls me forth to defend our common rights, and repel the bold invaders of the sons of freedom. The cause is the cause of God and man. Slavery shuts up every avenue that leads to knowledge, and leaves the soul ignorant of its own importance ; it is rendered incapable of promoting human happiness or piety or virtue ; and he that betrays that trust, being once acquainted with the pleasure and advantages of knowledge and freedom, is guilty of a spiritual suicide. I am determined to defend my rights,

¹ I take this from the original order-book of James Gould, preserved by his grandchildren, David and Nathan Gould, who still, in the third and fourth generation, pursue with respectability and skill their hereditary trade, under the name of Gould and Son.

and maintain my freedom, or sell my life in the attempt ; and I hope the righteous God that rules the world will bless the armies of America, and receive the spirits of those whose lot it is to fall in action into the paradise of God, into whose protection I commend you and myself ; and am, with truest regard, your loving husband,

“ N. GREENE.”

And thus, with a mind enriched and strengthened by study ; with habits of careful investigation and patient thought ; with principles drawn from reading and meditation, and tested by experience in practical legislation ; with the accuracy of a man of business, and the breadth of a man of speculation ; trained to observe and to listen ; painstaking and cautious in the formation of opinions, but prompt and resolute in action ; accustomed to deal with men ; not unused to responsibility ; and casting the pleasures of domestic life and the tranquil pursuits he loved behind him, he went forth, at the age of thirty-two, to take his place among great men, and fight the battles of his country.

BOOK SECOND.

FROM HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE COMMAND OF
THE RHODE ISLAND ARMY OF OBSERVATION TO
HIS APPOINTMENT AS QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL.

1775-1778.

BOOK SECOND.

FROM HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE COMMAND OF THE RHODE ISLAND ARMY OF OBSERVATION TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL.

1775-1778.



CHAPTER I.

New Phase in Greene's Life. — Condition of Rhode Island Camp. — Effects of his Presence. — Council of War at Cambridge. — Ward's Head-quarters. — Colonial Troops independent of each other. — Greene devotes himself to disciplining his Brigade. — Difficulties of the Task. — Drunkenness. — Punishments. — Hard Work. — Treated with "Great Respect" by the General Officers. — Bunker Hill. — Active Siege. — Dishonest Agents. — Arrival of Washington. — Charles Lee. — Greene sends an Address to Washington. — His Satisfaction at Washington's Appointment.

GREENE now enters upon a new phase of development, still partly formative, for he had his new profession to learn; but partly applicative also, for he brought to the study of it his life-long habits of work, both with mind and body, and his experience in practical legislation. One part of that experience stood him promptly in stead, — the dealing with the passions and caprices of men, — for, on Saturday, the 3d of June, when he reached the Rhode Island camp at Jamaica Plains, he found it "in great commotion"; the men "a factious set"; the officers unable to control

them; "several companies with clubbed muskets," upon the point of starting for home; "the commissaries beaten off"; an "excitement" which, "in a few days more, would have proved fatal to the campaign." His arrival checked the confusion, men and officers turning to him with hope, if not yet with perfect confidence. "Never," he writes, "was a man so little deserving so welcome." It was hard work "to limit people accustomed to so much latitude"; but he applied himself strenuously to the task, and "made several arrangements for order," with apparently good success; for, on the 5th, he writes to his wife: "I am well, but very much fatigued, not having slept above six hours in two nights." Colonel Varnum had not yet arrived. "I wish you would forward Colonel Varnum's regiment," he writes to his brother Jacob, the same day; "he will be a welcome guest in camp; I expect much from his and his troops' example."

On the same day, too, he was "summoned to a meeting with the generals," at Cambridge, in that quaint old house which, with the added associations of a historian's life and a poet's birth therein,¹ still looks across the Common, from its modest nook, upon almost its only remaining contemporary, the Washington Elm. It was in this house that Ward had established his head-quarters, and, with Spencer, Putnam, Heath, and Thomas, was

¹ Abiel Holmes, author of the *Annals*, lived and wrote his principal works in it; and Oliver Wendell Holmes was born in it.

trying to give shape and order to the young army. At first, each Colonial general commanded the troops of his own Colony, independently of the other generals. But gradually the conviction that there must be a single head crept in, and, when Washington came, Ward had already begun to be looked up to as commander-in-chief.¹

In the beginning, Greene found enough to do in his own brigade ; for he saw plainly, that, without discipline, it would be impossible to keep his men together, much less prepare them for service. Fortunately, among his officers there were several who, like himself, had been taught their drill by the drill-master of the Kentish Guards.² And thus he was enabled, from the first, to give the exercises of his three regiments a uniformity that was sadly wanting in the others, in which every colonel had a system of his own,³ neither the Norfolk exercises nor the regulations for 1764 for the King's troops being universally accepted.

A daily exercise was ordered for commissioned and non-commissioned officers. At four, the whole battalion was mustered and paraded, none but the sick, or those engaged in other duties, being excused.⁴ What the first parades were, and what

¹ Frothingham, *Siege of Boston*, p. 101.

war," I think it probable that Major Box and the English sergeant were the same person.

² In writing to Timothy Pickering in 1779, he speaks with great warmth of the aid received from Major Box ; and from what he says of this officer's services in "exercising and forming independent companies previous to the commencement of the

³ Kapp's Steuben, p. 127.

⁴ Regimental orders, MS. I am indebted for the use of this manuscript to my kinsman and old schoolmate, Daniel Howland Greene, M.D., of East Greenwich.

ideas of military etiquette some of the officers and men brought with them, the regimental order of the day for the 8th of June will show: "That Colonel Hitchcock's regiment parade on Wednesday every week, precisely at half after three o'clock, and march round the Square. The Colonel expects, in that parade, that every officer appear in his uniform, and that care is taken by the officers that every soldier be clean, and as neatly dressed as possible; and that no one who has breeches be permitted to wear trousers, nor to parade without having on his stockings and shoes; and that, during the march, no soldier be permitted to talk. As the regiment has gained honor from their regular performance of exercise, 'tis fully expected by the Colonel, that the officers spare no pains to instruct themselves in the exercise." The same order, it may be presumed, extended to the other regiments.

An order of the 10th provides for the proper cleaning of the firelocks: "That the officers of the several companies in Colonel Hitchcock's regiment call their companies together this forenoon, and see that every soldier's firelock be washed clean, and that some non-commissioned officer strictly attend while the guns are washing, and take special care that no one washes his gun without taking off the lock. 'Tis expected that every company washes their firelocks with hot water."

An order of the 4th of July directs, "That every captain in Colonel Hitchcock's regiment make a

return of the number of firelocks, of the number of rounds of powder and ball, number of tools and implements of all kinds in his company, and whoever has lost any implements, the names of the persons who lost them,— the return to be made this day."

It was found, too, upon trial, that the daily exercise already established was not sufficient to overcome those inequalities which are always found where many study the same thing together. On the 6th of July it was ordered, "That a drill be established for the instruction of those who are deficient in exercise, from ten to eleven o'clock in the forenoon every day; that the drill be commanded either by a commissioned or a non-commissioned officer of the several companies by rotation, beginning with Captain Thayer's company; that the drill parade for exercise before the Laboratory; and 'tis expected that every officer will strictly see that all those who are deficient in exercise in their company constantly attend the same at the time fixed for holding the drill." By the 28th of June, Greene was enabled to write that, "though raw, irregular, and undisciplined," his men were "under much better government than any round about Boston."

The greatest obstacle to the establishment of good discipline was in the officers rather than the men. Some did their duty; but for others, the transition from the equality of home life to the distinctions of camp was exceedingly difficult. "Some

captains, and many subordinate officers, neglect their duty," writes Greene; "some through fear of offending their soldiers, some through laziness, and some through obstinacy. This makes the task of the field officers very laborious. I have warned them of their negligence many times, and am determined to break every one for the future who shall lay himself open to it." A corporal in Hitchcock's regiment had already been "reduced to the ranks for repeated neglect of duty, and disobedience to his captain."¹

Another great obstacle to good order was drunkenness. The first court-martial recorded in Hitchcock's orderly-book was a regimental court-martial called to decide upon a case of intoxication. Jeremiah Olney, whose name we shall meet often hereafter, was president, and Stephen Olney a member. The culprit was Peter Young, who, being "sent for and examined, plead not guilty of the charge. Captain John Angell, captain of the guard, June 21, deposeth and saith, that the prisoner, Peter Young, was confined in the guard-house by Colonel Miller, at ten o'clock at night, for being found in liquor; who, when confined, behaved himself in a very indecent and contemptuous manner; damning the man that confined him, and also the man that kept him in confinement, throwing his hat about the guard-house. And the prisoner being present heard Captain Angell's evidence, and said he had no evidence to confute the same. The

¹ *Orderly-book, ut sup.*

Court, upon mature deliberation, are of opinion that the prisoner, Peter Young, be sentenced to ride the wooden horse fifteen minutes, with two guns tied at his feet, and ten minutes without guns, as an adequate punishment for his crime."

This, however, was merely a meeting of individual cases. To meet the evil itself, Greene wrote directly to the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, requesting them to interpose their authority, and prevent the sale of intoxicating liquors within the limits of the camp.¹

It was not easy to adapt civil punishments to military offences. Legislators shrank at first from the severity which, as the war continued, became almost habitual. In the Rhode Island "Rules and Orders for the Army of Observation," only three articles out of fifty-three impose capital punishment; and in two out of those three the court-martial is left free to order "such other punishment" as it may think best. Even whipping, though familiar to the public mind, is limited to the Mosaic rule of "thirty-nine stripes"; and in practice does not, at first, exceed fifteen, ten, and sometimes five.²

It was a great change for Greene, from the quiet life of Coventry. "My task," he writes, "is hard, and fatigue great. I go to bed late, and rise early. The number of applications you cannot conceive

¹ Journals of the Prov. Cong. of Mass., p. 461. Greene's letter has not been preserved.

² Rhode Island Colonial Records, Vol. VII. p. 340, Rules, &c., Arts. 24, 25, 30, and 50.

of, without being present to observe the round of business." He had wondered, in Rhode Island, at finding himself singled out by his acquaintances for special attentions. And now he felt something of the same kind of surprise at "the great respect" with which he was treated by "the general officers of the neighboring camps." "Were I," he writes, "to estimate my value by the attention paid to my opinion, I should have reason to think myself some considerable personage." But he lays it all to the account of his office. "Fatal experience," he adds, "teaches me every day, that mankind are apt to pay deference to station, and not to merit. Therefore, when I find myself surrounded by their flattering attentions, I consider them as due to my office, and not to me." His self-reliance had none of that presumptuous contempt for the opinions of others in it, which is so common in self-made men. "I shall study to deserve well," he said; "but cannot but lament the great defects I find in myself to discharge, with honor and justice, the important trust committed to my care." But as, while a mere anchor-smith at Coventry, Judge Howel had marked him out as a "very extraordinary man"; so at Cambridge, Timothy Pickering, hearing his questions and remarks as president of a court-martial, pronounced him "a man of true military genius, and decidedly the first man in the Court."¹ None were readier to acknowledge his superiority than the officers and men under his

¹ Caldwell's Life of Greene, p. 41.

immediate command. "My own officers and men," he writes, "are generally well satisfied,—nay, I have not heard one complaint."

It is not probable that he took part in planning the occupation of Bunker Hill, for on the day of the battle he was in Rhode Island. The tidings reached him towards evening. He immediately mounted his horse, and, riding "all night," arrived at camp "next day morning, when I found Charlestown all burnt to ashes, and the troops engaged on the other side of Cambridge Bay." A thousand men were sent over from Roxbury, to work upon the intrenchments at Prospect Hill; and among them, a hundred from his brigade, under the command of Christopher Greene, then a major in Varnum's regiment. The excitement of battle was not yet passed away. The British were "constantly firing cannon-shot," both on the new positions at Prospect and Winter Hill, and the earlier one at Roxbury, where part of Greene's force was now stationed. It was the first time that he had seen balls and shells flying in earnest. The "troops were in high spirits"; and ten days later, when he put together the conflicting statements of the losses on both sides, he "wished that we could sell them another hill at the same price."

Everything now bore the aspect of an active siege. The "enemy made several feints to deceive" the Americans, but were too "narrowly watched" to succeed. From the intrenchments that were fast rising on the top of Prospect Hill,

the British soldiers could be seen, with the naked eye, working hard to convert the little redoubt which they had won, at the sacrifice of so much blood, into an impregnable fortress. Shells were thrown into Roxbury. The English general seemed determined to familiarize his enemy with danger.

But there was another danger to guard against,—the demoralization of the troops, through the dishonesty of the agents to whom they looked for their daily supplies. It is a thankless task to tell the whole truth about the men of those days; but what are the lessons of history, if they are to be moulded and colored by the vanity or caprice of the historian? The war of independence brought great virtues into play, but it brought great vices, too,—faithless agents, heartless speculators, some cowards, some traitors, many selfish partisans, and not a few lukewarm patriots. We shall find men of each of these classes, crossing the path of the true and faithful, all through the war, and in every part of the country. We first meet them in the camp before Boston.

“There is continual complaints made to me,” writes Greene to Deputy-Governor Cooke of Rhode Island, on the 4th of July, “about the provisions falling short, some barrels not having much more than one half and two thirds the quantity they ought to contain. I wish your Honor would desire the committee throughout the Colony to examine all the provisions sent to camp, for I am

very positive they must have been greatly imposed upon. The field officers are continually complaining to me of the imposition, and requesting me to have a stop put to it as soon as possible. Many people in camp suspect the fidelity of the committee, to suffer such repeated impositions, and still no check put to them. Such unfavorable sentiments propagated abroad must do great injury to their characters, and perhaps render it very difficult for them to settle their accounts with the Colony, and do justice to themselves and those they are concerned with.

“A quantity of bread arrived from Providence last week, and to-day the much greater part was mouldy and unfit for use. (From) the first parcel I picked out what was good, and condemned the rest. This to-day appears all bad, upon examination, except a few single baskets. Such bread being brought here begets jealousy among the people, that they are going to be imposed upon; and little grievances are sufficient reasons to ground their complaints and murmurs upon, especially as they find themselves strongly supported by their friends and relations that comes to visit the troops in their quarters. There was a quantity of beef condemned last week, as being horse-meat. When it first took rise, I thought it merely chimerical. But Captain Jerry Olney, Captain Kitt Olney, and many others, came and informed me, that the people had a conceit that it was horse-flesh; that they had gone without victuals all day, and they desired me

to inquire into the matter. I, accordingly, did get a jury of butchers to examine it, and they condemned it as unfit for use, a considerable part being horse-flesh. Captain John Collins, of Newport, happened to be at camp at the same time, and he said he had seen abundance of horse-beef, and he said he was confident this was of that kind. You must, worthy sir, be sensible that the task is difficult, and trouble great, to form people into any regular government that comes out with minds possessed with notions of liberty that is nothing short of licentiousness. I am willing to spend, and be spent, in so righteous a cause; but unless I am supported by the helping hand of government, my endeavors will be defeated, and your expectations blasted. God knows, I am far from complaining out of prejudice to any mortal; but necessity on the one hand, and justice on the other, calls on me to represent the matter to you, that the evil may be put a stop to as early as possible. Many officers blames me for being so silent upon the occasion, and thinks I don't do justice to the Colony; but as I am fully sensible that many acts upon such narrow principles of policy influenced by party and prejudice, I have carefully studied to avoid their captious advice. But from mature deliberation, I have thought it prudent to make you acquainted with the state of the matter, that you may take such steps to remove the complaint as the subject requires. If the troops are comfortably subsisted, if they don't do their

duty, they can be punished, with great justice; but if they are not well fed, and properly clad, they excuse all their misconduct from one or the other reason."

We shall meet these complaints again, from time to time, in other forms, but always proceeding from the same cause,— the love of dishonest gain, and indifference to the public interest. Meanwhile, Congress had taken the decisive step, upon which the success of the war depended. On the 15th of June, Washington had been chosen commander-in-chief. On the 2d of July, about two in the afternoon, he reached Cambridge, with an escort of mounted citizens and a troop of light horse. It was Sunday, but a brisk cannonade upon Roxbury had been kept up throughout the morning from the British lines on Boston Neck. Washington must had heard it all through his morning ride.¹ Next day, he took formal command of the army. Some, perhaps, as they saw him draw his sword under the broad elm which still extends its protecting branches over the western border of Cambridge Common, remembered, that, a few years before, they had listened to Whitefield under that same tree. Only the troops stationed at Cambridge would seem to have been there; for on the 4th Greene writes: "I sent a detachment to-day of two hundred men, commanded by a colonel, lieutenant-colonel, and major, with a letter of address, to welcome his Excellency to camp. The detachment

¹ Frothingham, *Siege of Boston*, pp. 213, 214.

met with a very gracious reception, and his Excellency returned me a very polite answer, and invitation to visit him at his quarters."

But there was a man at Washington's side under that tree, to whom all eyes turned eagerly, when they had looked their fill at the majestic figure of the Commander-in-chief,—a tall man, lank and thin, with a huge nose, a satirical mouth, and restless eyes, who sat his horse as if he had often ridden at fox-hunts in England, and wore his uniform with a cynical disregard of common opinion,—Charles Lee, the most accomplished soldier in the whole army, men said, and whose science, they thought, was to be disinterestedly employed for us, because our cause was the cause of freedom. The next fifteen months will show how far this opinion was just.

How Greene felt at the idea of a commander-in-chief the letter from which I have just quoted will show: "A few minutes after the detachment was drawn out, I received a letter directed to his Excellency, under cover of one to me, from Mr. Ward, Secretary, who acquaints me that the General Assembly has appointed him to the command of our troops; all of which is perfectly agreeable, and I shall conduct myself accordingly; and hope, by his wise directions, accompanied with my best endeavors, and that of all my officers, to promote the service of the Colony, agreeable to their wishes. I expect the General next day after to-morrow to visit our camp."

How he felt towards Washington, he tells Samuel Ward, from Roxbury, ten days later,— not the Samuel he had written long letters to from Coventry, for that Samuel was with him, as a captain in Varnum's regiment,— but Samuel Ward the father, who had sat with Washington in Congress Hall, and voted to send him to Cambridge, as the fittest man for the office on whose right filling the whole contest turned. To him, then, Greene writes, on the 14th of July: "His Excellency, General Washington, has arrived amongst us, universally admired. Joy was visible in every countenance, and it seemed as if the spirit of conquest breathed through the whole army. I hope we shall be taught to copy his example, and to prefer the love of liberty, in this time of public danger, to all the soft pleasures of domestic life, and support ourselves with manly fortitude amidst all the dangers and hardships that attend a state of war. And I doubt not, under the General's wise direction, we shall establish such excellent order and strictness of discipline as to invite victory to attend him wherever he goes."

And how did Washington first meet him whom, from that time forward, he was never to meet without an expanding of the heart? Of their first meeting and first intercourse I know nothing ; but the qualities which had attracted the attention of Pickering, when only a casual observer, could not have been hidden long from so sagacious an observer as Washington, when there were such momentous questions to call them forth.

CHAPTER II.

Washington's Arrival the Beginning of a New Period. — His Staff. — Mifflin. — Trumbull. — Reed. — Gates. — Army of the United Colonies. — New Organization. — Three Grand Divisions. — Greene on Prospect Hill. — Gradual extension of the Works. — Death of Adjutant Mumford. — All Eyes fixed on Boston. — Parties to Camp. — The Country calls for a Battle. — Want of Powder. — Waste of Powder. — Preparations for Defence. — Extracts from General Orders.

WITH Washington's arrival in camp a new period begins, — a period of system and organization, still very imperfect it is true, but nevertheless a great advance upon the disconnected and irregular condition in which the troops had lived since they first broke ground before Boston. Washington's own experience with regular troops had been confined to his short service on Braddock's staff; and, like most of his officers, he had a great deal to learn. But he was familiar with the common text-books, — very incomplete and meagre guides as yet, — had had full experience of irregular troops, and a feeble government; had lived in camp; provided for the supplies of his men; and learnt how to deal with prejudices, ignorance, obstinacy, and sloth. His staff was not yet what it afterwards became; but there were men on it whose names interest us

still,—Mifflin, brave and eloquent, once, like Greene, a Quaker, and who now stood high in Washington's confidence, though at a later day he became a bitter enemy both of Washington and Greene; Trumbull, in whose young mind the instincts of the artist were already struggling with the ambition of military distinction; Reed, whose fine culture and pleasing address made him delightful as a companion, while his command of a free and flowing style, and his facility in seizing upon the important points of his subject, rendered his services, as secretary, invaluable; and Gates, the adjutant-general, who brought with him honorable recollections of the old French war, and a heart not yet corrupted by flattery and unmerited success.

The first step in organization was to convert the independent Colonial bands, which enthusiasm had brought together, into a regular army,—the army of the United Colonies. “I am informed by his Excellency,” writes Greene, “that the idea of Colony troops is to be abolished, and that the whole army is to be formed into brigades, and the generals to be appointed by the Congress.” Great was the commotion in camp when these tidings became public, and men began to ask each other anxiously who the new generals were to be. Greene viewed these incipient jealousies with regret. “I should be extremely sorry,” he writes, “for any schisms that might creep in through the ports of honor, from real or imaginary degradation.” For his own part, “if continued,” he was prepared to “serve

cheerfully"; if not, to "submit patiently. . . . I wish that good and able men may be the objects of the Continental choice, rather than subjects of particular interests." When the appointments were announced, he found himself last on the list as brigadier-general.

The army was divided into three grand divisions, Greene being placed, with seven regiments, in the left wing, under General Lee, with Sullivan, at the head of six regiments, for senior brigadier,—in all, five thousand six hundred and seventy-seven men. His station was at Prospect Hill,—the Mount Pisgah of some of the old maps,—with "the enemy's lines and buildings on Bunker Hill, and the desolation at Charlestown,"¹ full in view. Not far from the foot of the hill was the farm-house in which Lee had taken up his quarters,—a comfortable two-story building, with convenient rooms, and a pleasant view, and all too good, even in its old age, to be called "Hobgoblin Hall."² And within two miles, by a pleasant road, which soon became as familiar to him as the green lanes that lead from Potowomut to Coventry, stood the fine old mansion which, although Sparks and Everett have since lived in it, and Longfellow has consecrated it as the birthplace of America's greatest poems, is still known, far and near, as the head-quarters of Washington.

¹ Belknap's Diary, Oct. 23. In a letter of the times, Charlestown is said to be "now in ashes, and nothing to be seen of that fine town but

chimneys and rubbish." — Force, Am. Archives, 4th Series, Vol. III. p. 73.

² Letters of Mrs. Adams, p. 64.

Three of the regiments in Greene's brigade were his own Rhode-Islanders, — ten hundred and eighty-five men in all, — led by Varnum, Hitchcock, and Church, with men of strong wills, like Christopher Greene and the two Olneys and the two Angells and Simeon Thayer, and of rich culture, like Samuel Ward, for majors and captains and lieutenants. No troops in the whole army were equipped and appointed as they were, with their tents and marquees, and the "four excellent field-pieces,"¹ which had once formed part of the garrison of Fort George. Greene "spared no pains, night nor day, to teach them their duty"; and, fully seconded by most of his officers, — especially by Varnum and Hitchcock, "excellent disciplinarians," — succeeded in bringing them to a high state of efficiency. Lee bestowed great encomiums upon their bearing and discipline. "I flatter myself," writes Greene, "that they comparatively deserve it." Four Massachusetts regiments, — seventeen hundred and thirteen men, — under Whitcomb, Gardner, Brewer, and Little, completed his brigade.²

The irregular leaguer became a regular siege. One by one the hills and strong positions were occupied, and secured by strong works, — Prospect, Winter, Ploughed, and Cobble Hills, Lechmere Point, Sewall's Farm, "a semicircle of eight or nine miles," with the enemy in "the centre,

¹ Essex Gazette, quoted by Frothingham, Siege of Boston, p. 101, note. ² I take my numbers from Frothingham, Siege of Boston, p. 219.

with entire command of the water.”¹ Every day added to the strength of the American lines. Almost every day, too, there was a skirmish, or a surprise, or a cannonade, shells and balls falling thick within the American works, sometimes killing, sometimes maiming, but producing, in the main, “no other effect than to inure the Americans to danger,”² and make them ask, if, with upwards of two thousand shot and shells, they have killed only twelve persons, “how many shot and bombs will it require to subdue the whole of his Majesty’s rebellious subjects?”³ “I have no doubt,” Greene writes to his wife, “that I shall be safely conducted through the shower of Tory hail. But whatever be my fate, let my reputation stand fair for the inspection of all inquiring friends.”

Yet the first sight of a violent death, within his own immediate circle, came upon him with a shock. Adjutant Mumford, of East Greenwich,—a member of Varnum’s regiment,—had his head taken off by a cannon-ball. “My sweet angel,”—Greene writes to his wife, immediately after,—“the anxiety that you must feel at the unhappy fate of Mr. Mumford, the tender sympathy for the distress of his poor lady, the fears and apprehensions for my safety, under your present debilitated state, must be a weight too great for you to support. We are all in the hands of the great Jehovah; to him let us look for protection. I trust that our con-

¹ Washington to his brother. Writ-
ings, Vol. III. p. 39.

² Heath’s Memoirs, p. 43.

³ Thacher’s Military Journal, Jan-
uary 18, 1776.

troversy is a righteous one ; and although many of our friends and relatives may suffer an untimely fate, yet we must consider the evil sanctified by the righteousness of the dispute. Let us, then, put our confidence in God, and recommend our souls to his care. Stifle your own grief, my sweet creature, and offer a small tribute of consolation to the afflicted widow. I could wish, from my soul, that you was removed from this scene of horror, altogether inconsistent with the finer feelings of a delicate mind. I would come and see you, but prudence forbids my absence. I sent Colonel Varnum to communicate to you the wretched loss his poor lady has met with. My heart melts with pity, but dumb silence must speak my grief until I am in a situation to give scope to the natural sentiment of the human heart. I hope his good sense and knowledge of the human heart will point out the most prudent method."

Before another year was passed, his eye had become more familiar with violent death, and he would hardly have thought of sending a field officer to announce such an event. But at first, the true heart still pleaded earnestly against indurating custom.

Meanwhile, from far and near, all eyes were fixed upon Boston. "The roads were lined with spectators." Parties were formed to go and see the camp, many coming from a great distance, and looking, some with admiration, some with terror,— all with wonder,— at the forts, "bomb proof"; at breast-

works, "seventeen feet thick"; at the trenches, "wide and deep"; at the "forked impediments" for guarding the approaches to them.¹ Sometimes, in the midst of their gazing, they would see a party of officers go by on horseback, and distinguishing, in the midst of them, one with a "noble and majestic air, . . . tall and well-proportioned," would say to each other, "That is his Excellency! that is General Washington!" not failing, at the same time, to take note of his "blue coat, with buff-colored facings; the rich epaulette on each shoulder; the buff underdress; elegant, small sword, and black cockade in his hat."² Sometimes this pleasure excursion had a fatal ending. Trumbull's sister, the wife of Colonel Huntington, received such a shock from what she saw, that she went mad, and soon after died.³ But to the greater part of those whom curiosity or family attachment brought there it was a wild, picturesque scene, full of strange excitement. To their inexperienced eyes, the morning prayers, followed by the reading of the orders of the day; "the great distinction between officers and soldiers," everybody being "made to know his place, and keep in it, or be tied up, and receive thirty or forty lashes"; and "the thousands at work every day, from four to eleven," gave the army a general air of discipline and order, and inspired a degree of confidence which its leaders were far from shar-

¹ Letter cited in Frothingham's Siege of Boston, p. 275. The name of the writer is not given.

² Thacher's Military Journal, July 20, 1775.

³ Trumbull's Autobiography, p. 22.

ing. If, without this preparation, they had held Bunker Hill so long against the best troops in the British army, why can they not, with the increased strength which discipline gives them, drive the enemy from Boston? The country grew clamorous for another battle.

The subject was brought up more than once in council of war. The first council had determined not to occupy Dorchester, nor to defend it if the British should attempt to occupy it. But shall they be left in undisturbed possession of Boston? Greene felt that "an attack upon a town, garrisoned with eight thousand regular troops, was a serious object." He knew, as Washington did, that, however veteran-like the troops might appear to common eyes, to the soldier's eye they were still "raw and undisciplined." Yet he thought that an attack, with twenty thousand men, might succeed; "but of an army of twenty thousand men," he writes, "it will be hard if we cannot find eight thousand who will fight manfully. There must be some cowards among them as well as among us."

There were anxious hours, as summer and autumn wore slowly on. On the 3d of August a council was held at head-quarters, and it was found that, owing to a mistake in the report of the Massachusetts committee, instead of four hundred and eighty-five quarter-casks of powder in the magazine, as had been supposed, there were only thirty-five half-barrels, or not half a pound a man. When Washington heard the report, he was so much struck

by the danger “that he did not utter a word for half an hour; every one else was equally surprised. Messengers were despatched to all the Southern Colonies to call in their stores.”¹ The dangerous secret was carefully kept from the army. But Greene knew it; and as he looked upon his silent cannon, and listened to the frequent roar of the enemy’s cannon, or marked at night “the track of their shells,— a long train of light on the dark sky,”²—he must have often asked himself, “How can I hold this hill, if they come out now?”

It was hard to enforce even the most salutary rules in an army in which a large proportion of the officers stood more in need of discipline than their men. When the danger from a deficiency of powder was passed, a new danger arose, from the “wanton waste” of it. “There being,” say Greene’s orders for November 7, “an open and daring violation of a general order, in firing at geese, as they pass over the camp, General Greene gives positive orders, that any person that fires for the future be immediately put under guard. Every officer that stands an idle spectator, and sees such a wanton waste of powder, and don’t do his utmost to suppress the evil, may expect to be reported.”

In the orders of the 9th, the same subject recurs, under another form: “That all the cartridges delivered out this day, if the bunches are not broke, the captains collect them in their several companies, and deliver them out when occasion

¹ Sullivan to New Hampshire Committee of Safety, August 5, 1775. ² Trumbull’s Autobiography, pp. 21, 22.

calls. Every person that fires his gun without positive orders, to be punished immediately by a regimental court-martial; and if these orders are not obeyed, the General will order the first transgressor to be tied up and whipped, for an example."

An order of the next day brings to light another infraction of discipline: "General Greene is informed, that the soldiers have got into a practice of stealing cartridges from one another, and those that go on furlough, or are discharged, carry them home. As this conduct is both dishonorable and villainous, the General hopes there are but few, if any, that are so lost to honor and honesty as to commit so dirty a crime. If any are detected in the fact, they may expect to be punished without mercy."

Every alarm, too, seems to have furnished a pretext for wasting powder. "The officers of this brigade," continue the orders of the 10th, "are once more desired to pay particular attention to the preservation of the cartridges. There has been such a wanton waste, for some time past, and still continues, upon every alarm, that it is really disgraceful. It is impossible to conceive upon what principle this strange itch for firing originates, as it is rather a mark of cowardice than bravery to fire away ammunition, without any intention. If the soldiers are desirous of defending their rights and liberties, the General desires they would not deprive themselves of the means to execute so laudable a purpose."

These appeals to the patriotism of the troops are not always successful. A large infusion of bad elements would seem, from the frequent courts-martial recorded in the orderly-books, to have found its way into the patriot camp. Stealing and drunkenness were the principal crimes; but disobedience, desertion, and even mutiny sometimes occurred, and were punished by fines, imprisonment, whipping, and, in the case of corporals and sergeants, by degradation to the ranks. The reports of courts-martial fill many pages of the orderly-books, showing very clearly that love of country was not the only motive which brought recruits and volunteers to the camp before Boston.

Greene's duty was severe,—to bed late, and up early, much riding, much writing, frequent councils at head-quarters, the daily details of discipline, and the daily duties of a siege in daily progress. In his attempts to enforce exactness and order, he enters into minute details. "The captains," say the orders for November 12, "every day to examine the arms and ammunition of their companies, and see that their arms are kept clean, the locks in good order, and the flints well fixed; to count the cartridges and flints of each individual; for every cartridge that is lost to be charged one shilling lawful money; and for every flint missing, three-pence; a report to be made daily of the regiment to the colonel, in what condition they find the guns and ammunition. Any captain or subordinate that neglects to make a daily return to his colonel or

commanding officer, the colonel to report him to the general of brigade, that he may report him to head-quarters."

"The days being short," says an order of the 1st of November, "and the weather coming on cold, the General orders the artificers to begin half an hour before sunrise, and continue at work as long as they can well see. The officers commanding the several parties are to see the order punctually complied with. The artificers are to examine their arms and ammunition once a week at least, and see that their guns and cartridges are in good order. . . . The General has great reason to be displeased with the sergeants and corporals on the main guard, in planting and relieving sentries. For the future, they are to give each sentry a proper detail of his duty as sentry, for what intention he is placed, and see that the sentry that relieves gives the same detail that he received to the relieving sentry; and the sergeants or corporals are not to suffer the sentries relieved to straggle home to the guard, but to keep them with the party until the whole are relieved, and then to march them home to the guard together."

The alarm posts and positions in case of alarm, and the duties of the different officers, are distinctly marked out. Exact orders are given for the careful keeping of the working tools, which are to be "collected and numbered every evening, the officers commanding the fatigue parties to be accountable for the tools delivered them." When,

a few years later, Greene became quartermaster-general, the habit of these minute details, and the practical knowledge acquired by them, served, on more than one occasion, to lighten his labors.

But one of his most serious duties was the constant provision for defence. "General Greene," say the orders of the 10th of November, "is greatly displeased with the officers of the artillery, that they were so ill-provided with wads to-day. The General gives positive orders, that proper provisions be made immediately, that the artillery may be in readiness at an alarm at the first notice." "Upon an alarm," say the orders of the 12th November, Colonel Brewster's regiment to take post in the citadel on the left; Colonel Little's regiment to form on parade in the long lines next to the barracks; Colonel Thompson's in the front of Colonel Little's, there to wait for orders,—no officer to stir from his post, nor to suffer his people to straggle, but to keep them silent and attentive."

November was an anxious month, and new arrangements were needed for the long nights and short days. "The field officer of the day to examine the sally-ports in these fortifications, and if the chevaux-de-frise are out of repair, they are to put them in order, and if any of the pickets are out of place, to have them rectified; the firing of the morning gun to be discontinued; the reveille to be beat at gray daylight, at the beating of which the troops to man the lines with as much expedition as possible; all the sentries on the lines to be posted

on the parapet, and to hail every person that approaches the lines on the outside as soon as it is dark, and to suffer no one to come near the lines without giving the countersign. All the soldiers, for the future, to repair to their quarters at nine o'clock ; and if any are catched abroad after that hour, and cannot give a satisfactory account of their business, to be sent to the main guard, as none but drunkards and thieves will be out at a later hour, unless upon some special business."

Among the provisions for repelling an assault are instructions for the use of spears. "Every colonel or commanding officer of a regiment," say the orders of the 15th, "to appoint thirty men that are active, bold, and resolute, to use the spears in defence of the lines, instead of guns ; to form in the centre of the rear of the regiment, to stand ready to push the enemy off the breastwork, if they should attempt to get over the parapet into the lines. Let those be appointed that are the worst equipped for arms, and those that have none at all, provided the size, strength, and activity are agreeable for the purpose of their appointment, to be commanded by a sub and sergeant."

I dwell upon these details, for they not only belong to the camp life of those anxious days, but help us in tracing step by step the growth of the general as we have already traced that of the man. Watchfulness, energy, rapidity of comprehension, and patience of labor were equally the characteristics of both.

CHAPTER III.

Term of Service of the Army most out. — Congress sends a Committee to Camp. — Greene's Impressions of Franklin. — His first Intercourse with Southern Members of Congress. — His Efforts to do away with Sectional Jealousies. — Lord Sheffield. — Church's Treason. — Gradual Growth of a Desire for Independence. — Extracts from Greene's Letters to Governor Ward. — His Idea of the Duty of Congress. — An Army of Seventy Thousand Men. — Feelings of the People.

THE approach of autumn brought another anxiety with it. The army was enlisted for only a few months, and those months were passing rapidly away. What will England do? October brought "the echo of Bunker's hill,"¹ and the news of "warlike preparations." What will Congress do? After much ill-timed delay, Congress appointed Franklin, Lynch, and Harrison a committee to go to camp and consult with Washington about the new army. While they were yet on their way the general officers met in council, and, after a careful examination of the subject, fixed upon twenty thousand men as the number required to continue the siege. On the 15th the committee reached head-quarters. "I had the honor," Greene writes the next day, "to be introduced to that very great man Dr. Franklin, whom I viewed with silent admiration the whole evening.

¹ Sparks's Writings of Washington, Vol. III. p. 113.

Attention watched his lips, and conviction closed his periods." And Franklin, on his side, may have looked with more than ordinary interest on Greene; for the name had long been familiar to his ear, and Greene's wife was the niece of his "dear friend," Catherine Ray.¹ But this was no time for forming new friendships. The committee had hard work to do, and when it was done, Greene and Franklin parted never to meet again.

It was the first time, too, that Greene had been brought into contact with members of Congress from the South, and he took advantage of the opportunity to speak to them about "the groundless jealousy of the New England Colonies," which was said to prevail there. "I mentioned this subject," he writes to Governor Ward, "to Mr. Lynch and Colonel Harrison, who assured me there was no such sentiment prevailing in Congress nor among the southern inhabitants of any respectability. I am sorry to find they were mistaken. It grieves me that such jealousies should prevail. If they are nourished, they will sooner or later sap the foundations of the union and dissolve the connection. God in mercy avert so dreadful an evil!"

How deeply he felt and how justly he reasoned upon this subject may be seen by the order of the day for the 25th of October: "General Greene is

¹ Wife of William Greene of Warwick, afterwards Governor of Rhode Island, whose name I have already had occasion to mention. Many of Franklin's letters to this lady, both as

Catherine Ray and Catherine Ray Greene, have been published by Mr. Sparks. The originals are still in the possession of her grandson, Lieutenant-Governor William Greene.

greatly displeased with a number of evil-disposed persons that are endeavoring to beget jealousy and discontent amongst the troops, by promoting and propagating a spirit of reflection amongst the different regiments; as such a conduct has a tendency to bring on great confusion and disorder in the brigade, and to alienate the affection of one Colony from another, and destroy that confidence and union now happily subsisting amongst us, the General entreats all the officers of whatsoever rank to suppress as much as possible such a growing evil as national, colonial, regimental, or personal reflection, and requests the field officers of the several regiments to punish every person that is guilty of such high misdemeanor with the utmost severity."

The same sentiments appear in a letter of October 16th to Governor Ward. "As the troops are considered continental and not colonial, there must be some systematical plan for the payment without any reference to particular colonies; otherwise they will be partly continental and partly colonial. His Excellency has a great desire to banish every idea of local attachments. It is next to impossible to unhinge the prejudices that people have for places and things they have had a long connection with. But the fewer of those local attachments discover themselves in our plan for establishing the army the more satisfactory it must be to the Southern gentry. For my own part, I feel the cause and not the place. I would as soon go to Virginia as stay

here. I can assure the gentlemen to the southward that there could not be anything more abhorrent proposed, than a union of those colonies for the purpose of conquering the southern colonies."

But if we would do full justice to Greene's sentiments upon this vital subject, and his early comprehension of the natural relations of the colonies to each other, we must compare his words with those of an English statesman high in rank and authority. "The interests of one Colony are no ways incompatible with the interests of another. . . . The different climates and produce of the colonies will ever preserve a harmony among them by an active trade and commerce." Thus writes Greene on the 31st of December, 1775.

And thus, in 1783, wrote the friend of Gibbon: "It will not be an easy matter to bring the American states to act as a nation; they are not to be feared as such by us. . . . Their climate, their staples, their manners, are different; their interests opposite, and that which is beneficial to one is destructive to the other."¹

There were still other things to be anxious about. A little before the arrival of the committee, Greene had been surprised by a visit from his old teacher, Master Maxwell. Master Maxwell brought with

¹ Lord Sheffield's Observations on the Commerce of the American States, p. 137, in which Gibbon found "plain sense, full information, and warm spirit," and hailed it as a good sign that Laurens thought it had done "much mischief." — Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works, Vol. I. pp. 609-617, ed. 4to.

him a letter from Henry Ward, Secretary for the Colony, enclosing a mysterious letter in cipher which a woman from Boston had tried to send on board the ship of the notorious Wallace, the scourge of Narragansett Bay. Greene carried the letter to Washington. Who could the writer be, and what were his intentions? The first step towards the discovery of this was to discover the messenger. Here other counsellors appear to have been called in, and among them "Old Put," who tracked her out, compelled her to mount behind him, and brought her in triumph to head-quarters. Not even Washington could keep from laughing when, from his chamber window, he saw the sturdy "Wolf Hunter" dash up to the Craige House gate, leap from his horse, and drag his terrified prisoner up the broad pathway to the door. But composing his countenance, he reached the stairway landing as the front door was thrown open, and, putting on his sternest look, assured her that nothing but a full confession could save her from a halter. A shudder must have gone through all who stood near when they heard the name of Dr. Church,—a man trusted, respected, beloved, foremost among patriots with voice and hand and pen. Could he be a traitor?

He was immediately arrested and his papers seized. The letter was deciphered. "I attended the General Court of this Province to-day," Greene writes to his wife on the 27th of October, to hear "Dr. Church's examination relative to his treason.

With art and ingenuity surpassing whatever you saw he veiled the villany of his conduct, and by implication transformed vice into virtue. But notwithstanding all his art and address, and his faculty of making the worse appear the better reason, he could not establish his innocence either satisfactory to the public in general or the General Court in particular." He was condemned to close confinement. Mortification, mingled perhaps with the pain of a tardy repentance, and rendered more distressing by the sudden change from an active life to a life of solitary disoccupation, soon began to tell upon his health; and after several months of rigorous imprisonment, obtaining permission to go to the West Indies, he set out upon his voyage of exile, and was never heard of more. But the memory of his treason survived him to trouble many minds, as perils thickened, with painful recollections and anxious doubts.¹

In the spring "the feelings of the people had varied with the varying news from England."² But as summer wore away the conviction gradually gained ground that there was nothing to hope either from the King or the Parliament, although, as the paroles and countersigns show from time to time, Cambden and Burke still held their places in the affections of the leaders. Even "Wilkes and Liberty" sometimes is used.³ But as early as October "the plan of Independence was become a

¹ For Church's letter, see Cowell's Spirit of 1776 in Rhode Island.

² Belknap, p. 87.
³ Orderly-book.

favorite point in the army," and praying for the king "offensive."¹ How soon Greene began to "wish heartily for Independence" it is difficult to say with certainty; but in a letter of October 16th he had already hinted at it, and in another of the 23d he returns to the subject. "We had as well begin in earnest at first as at last, for we have no alternative but to fight it out or be slaves. . . . The alternative is separation from Great Britain or subjugation to her." With the question of Independence came the question of foreign trade: "We should open our ports to all who have a mind to come and trade with us"; and of political relations: "France, as a real enemy to Great Britain, acts upon a true plan of policy in refusing to intermeddle until she is satisfied that there is no hope of accommodation."

In January, when he had read "the king's late gracious speech to both houses of Parliament," he became anxious for immediate action. "Permit me," he writes to Governor Ward, "to recommend, from the sincerity of my heart, ready at all times to bleed in my country's cause, a declaration of Independence; and call upon the world, and the great God who governs it, to witness the necessity, propriety, and rectitude thereof." The magnitude of the contest, which he sees clearly, does not alarm him. "My worthy friend, the interests of mankind hang upon that truly worthy body of which you are a member. You stand the representatives, not

¹ Belknap, p. 92.

of America only, but of the whole world; the friends of liberty and the supporters of the rights of human nature. It hath been said that Canada, in the late war, was conquered in Germany. Who knows but that Britain may be in the present contest. I take it for granted that France and Spain have made overtures to the Congress. Let us embrace them as brothers. We do not want their land forces in America; their navy we do. Their commerce will be mutually beneficial. They will doubtless pay the expenses of their fleet, as it will be employed in protecting their own trade. Their military stores we want amazingly. These will be articles of commerce. The Elector of Hanover has ordered his German troops to relieve the garrisons of Gibraltar and Port Mahon. France will, of consequence, attack and subdue Hanover with little trouble. This will bring on a very severe war in Germany, and turn Great Britain's attention that way. This may prevent immense expense and innumerable calamities in America."

A wide range this for the thoughts of an anchor-smith. Hear, too, how he reasons upon America's duty in the struggle:—

"A large army must be raised in addition to the forces upon the present establishment. . . . All the forces in America should be under one commander, raised and appointed by the same authority, subjected to the same regulations, and ready to be detached wherever the occasion may require. . . . It will be infinitely safer, and not more expensive in the end, for the continent to give a

large bounty to any number of troops in addition to what may be ordered on the present establishment, that will engage during the war, than to enlist them from year to year without a bounty. . . . How will posterity, millions yet unborn, bless the memory of those brave patriots who are now hastening the consummation of freedom, truth, and religion ! But want of decision renders wisdom in council insignificant, as want of power has prevented us here from destroying the mercenary troops now in Boston. Frugality, a most amiable domestic virtue, becomes a vice of the most enormous kind when opposed to the common good. The tyrant, in his last speech, has convinced us that to be free or not depends upon ourselves. Nothing, therefore, but the most vigorous exertion on our part can shelter us from the evils intended us. How can we, then, startle at the idea of expense, when our whole property, our dearest connections, our liberty, nay, life itself, is at stake ; let us, therefore, act like men inspired with a resolution that nothing but the powers of heaven shall conquer us. It is no time for deliberation : the hour is swiftly rolling on when the plains of America will be deluged with human blood. Resolves, deliberations, and all the parade of heroism in words, will not obtain a victory. Arms and ammunition are as necessary as men, and must be had at the expense of everything short of Britain's claims."

The question of domestic enemies, of Tories, is daily becoming more embarrassing. He is for prompt action and uncompromising severity. "Governor Franklin and the Assembly go on with a high hand. His impudence and the Congress's silence astonish all this part of the world. To suffer such presumption to go unpunished betrays a want of

spirit to resent or power to punish. The dignity of Congress ought to be held sacred, or else its authority will soon be brought into contempt. His conduct is calculated to breed a mutiny in the state; such budding mischiefs cannot be too early nipped; diseases that might have been easily remedied if seasonably attended to, have often been rendered incurable by being too long neglected. I wish this may not be the case here. . . . General Lee has just returned from Rhode Island. He has taken the Tories in hand, and sworn them by a very solemn oath that they would not, for the future, grant any supplies to the enemy, directly nor indirectly, nor give them any kind of intelligence, nor suffer it to be done by others, without giving information. Joseph Wanton and Doctor Hunter were the principals."

The want of arms had compelled Washington to retain the weapons of those who were leaving the army. On the 4th of January Greene writes: "Undoubtedly the detaining of arms, being private property, is repugnant to many principles of civil and natural law and hath disgusted many. But the great law of necessity must justify the expedient till we can be otherwise furnished."

Nor was his opinion upon the necessity of united action less decided. "There appears a strange hobble in our gait. Here we are at loggerheads, in other places only sparring, and others again are in perfect tranquillity. Here we are cutting them off from fresh provisions, and re-

moving the stock from the island, which amounts to a perfect depopulation, while at New York, Philadelphia, and many other parts of America, their ships are supplied with everything they stand in need of, and live in the midst of peace and plenty. If we are to be considered as one people, and they as the common enemy, upon what principle are they so differently treated in the different governments?"

Washington had been disappointed in the common people, and made no secret of his disgust. "His Excellency is a great and good man. I feel the highest degree of respect for him. I wish him immortal honor. I think myself happy in an opportunity to serve under so good a general. My happiness will be still greater if fortune gives me an opportunity to contribute to his glory and my country's good.

"But his Excellency, as you observe, has not had time to make himself acquainted with the genius of this people. They are naturally as brave and spirited as the peasantry of any other country; but you cannot expect veterans of a raw militia of only a few months' service. The common people are exceedingly avaricious; the genius of the people is commercial, from their long intercourse with trade. The sentiment of honor, the true characteristic of a soldier, has not yet got the better of interest. His Excellency has been taught to believe the people here a superior race of mortals; and finding them of the same temper and disposi-

tions, passions and prejudices, virtues and vices of the common people of other governments, they sink in his esteem. The country round here set no bounds to their demands for hay, wood, and teaming. It has given his Excellency a great deal of uneasiness, that they should take this opportunity to extort from the necessities of the army such enormous prices."

His relations with Washington are becoming intimate; and the reserved, cautious man is already beginning to "lean his great arm upon him." "The General has often expressed to me his uneasiness about the expenses, they so far exceed the expectations of Congress. He is afraid they will sink under the weight of such charges."

He, too, has thought upon this subject. "Economy is undoubtedly essential in this dispute; there should be no wanton waste of public property; but if you starve the cause you protract the dispute."

To his mind, the duty of Congress is plain. "If the Congress wish to put the finishing stroke to this war, they must exert their whole force at once, and give every measure an air of decision. I pray God we may not lose the critical moment. Human affairs are ever like the tide, constantly on the ebb and flow. Our preparations in all parts of the United Colonies ought to be so great as to leave no room to doubt our intentions to support the cause and obtain our conditions. This will draw in the weak and wavering, and give such a turn to the minds of the people that small shocks shall

not be seriously felt in the general plan of operations."

He was for embodying seventy thousand men at once, stationing a body in each maritime town to protect it against piratical incursions, and support the spirited and confirm the weak and wavering": each body "to be considered as a detachment from the grand army, subject to the commander-in-chief, and at his disposal and discretion. To cure the itch for going home on furlough, and save the continent the needless expense of paying a large body of troops that are absent from camp," he suggests an exchange of the Southern and Northern troops.

It had been proposed to pay the troops part of their wages and put the other part in trust for the benefit of their families. He does not approve of this. "The colonels are the best judges of the prudence and good economy of their soldiers. Those who behave well and make a prudent use of their money want no agent; for they will receive monthly payments, and such part as they can spare for the support of their families can easily be conveyed home." For the others, "a man from each town or county" might be employed as an agent.

He had already, as we have seen, formed the idea of a great army, well organized, thoroughly disciplined, properly fed, clothed, and paid, and enlisted for the whole war; and regarding this as the surest way of bringing the contest to a prompt

decision, endeavored, by means of his correspondence with Governor Ward, to convey his idea to Congress.

He looks anxiously, too, towards the people, complaining, not of "the lower class, but of the merchants and wealthy farmers," who have raised the prices of many articles "four times the first cost, and of many of them ~~cent~~^{one} per cent." These "are the people that wound the cause. When people are distressed, it is natural for them to try everything and everywhere to get relief; and to find oppression instead of relief from these two orders of men, will go near to driving the poorer sort to desperation. It will be good policy in the United Colonies to render the poorer sort of people as easy and happy under their present circumstances as possible; for they are creatures of a day, and present gain and gratification, though small, has more weight with them than much greater advantages at a distance. A good politician must and will consider the temper of the times and the prejudices of the people he has to deal with, when he takes his measures to execute any great design."

CHAPTER IV.

Greene's Life, Habits, and Associates in Camp.—Letter to his Wife.—Christopher Greene and Samuel Ward join the Canada Expedition.—Interest awakened by it.—Anxiety caused by the burning of Falmouth.—By the Progress of Enlistment.—Extracts from Letters.—Opinion on giving Bounties.—Mistake of Congress.—Old Troops go.—New Troops come.—Arms retained.—New Year.—The Flag.—Scanty Supplies.—Small-Pox.—Mrs. Greene in Camp.—Siege draws to a Close.—Dorchester Heights occupied.—Preparations for an Attack.—Storm.—Evacuation of Boston.

AND thus Greene lived, with his active mind constantly employed watching the progress of events, revolving the great questions of the day, and keenly alive to the magnitude of the contest in which he was engaged. The principles with which he had stored it in his quiet home at Potowomut and Coventry, gleaning with a bold hand the rich fields of history and philosophy, found a daily application, as the lessons of past history were daily repeated in the history that was growing under his own eye. His horizon was enlarged; and thought, even when it did not open new channels, flowed in broader currents through the old. The discussions of councils of war had taken the place of solitary meditation; and ideas which, twelve months earlier, he might have thrown out in their germ as an exercise letter to Samuel

Ward, Jr., now filled elaborate pages to Samuel Ward, Sen., as suggestions to be woven into the framework of an empire. In his personal habits there was little change, great as was the change in the nature of his pursuits. He was still up with the dawn ; he was still hours in the saddle ; he was still busy with his pen ; he was still an attentive listener ; he was still a patient thinker ; and he still loved his book,— finding time, even in the greatest pressure of business, to calm his mind by a page of some favorite author, before he laid his head upon his pillow. Some time he found, too, for social relaxation, and that friendly interchange of sentiments and opinions which he always regarded as one of the chief blessings of life. In his own brigade were his early friends Varnum, Ward, and Christopher Greene ; and to them was soon added, as chaplain,— though not without a protest from all the other chaplains of the army, — the eloquent Universalist, John Murray.¹ Here, also, his early acquaintance with Knox began to ripen into friendship, and Reed obtained a hold upon his confidence which was never shaken. With Lee, too, he seems to have lived upon intimate terms. “I have taken the liberty to show your last letter to General Lee,” he writes to Governor Ward in January, “whose knowledge of Europe and America, genius and learning, enable him to give you the advice you want. He has written you fully on the subject ; it would be mere

¹ Amory's Sullivan, Vol. I. p. 181.

Life of Nathanael Greene.

arrogance in me to say anything upon the subject, after he has taken up the pen." The dinners at head-quarters had become friendly meetings. "I am now going," he writes to his wife, in September, "to dine with his Excellency General Washington, and Mr. Murray with me. I wish you could fly to Cambridge, and partake of a friendly repast." Only in one thing had the regularity of his habits changed. Amidst all these occupations, Sunday was no longer the day it had been from his youth upwards. "Mr. Murray gave us a sermon to-day," he writes to his wife, three or four weeks after her first visit to camp. "This is the first sermon I have heard since your first arrival at Jamaica Plains. Perhaps, you stood between me and the Gospel; but I fear, if the true reasons should be inquired after, you would escape the charge."

As the evenings grow longer he writes for more books; and, to show that his admiration of Lee's mind did not extend to his dress, I will add, that in the same paragraph he asks for more shirts. These long evenings awaken thoughts of home. "It is past nine o'clock; the room is still, and the company all gone. My attention is turned towards you. Permit me to address you, my dear, with some sentiments of warm affection. My soul breathes a secret prayer for your happiness, amidst these times of general calamity. How fondly should I press you to my bosom, were you with me. Cruel separation! But I console myself that you are happily provided for, and I in the way of

my duty, offering my small services, united with others who are endeavoring to preserve an oppressed people from cruel slavery,— the worst of miseries. May God speed our efforts, and crown us with success.” He pictures her to himself, “amidst a little circle of friends, with anxious bosoms, petitioning the throne of Grace. Surely, Providence will hear the prayers of the innocent. It will come up before him like a sweet-smelling savor, like frankincense from the altar of Innocence. O America! what a black cloud hangs over this once happy land, but now miserable and afflicted people.”

In September he lost the society of two of his friends,— Christopher Greene and Samuel Ward,— both of whom had volunteered for the “Canada expedition, a long and tedious voyage,” he writes his wife on the 10th. “I am sorry that so good an officer is going from the hill; his regiment will feel a severe loss. Captain Ward is also embarked with him in the same expedition. I did everything in my power to dissuade him from the undertaking; but the heart and zeal of youth, ambitious of distinguishing himself, overcame the cool reasons that I could offer.” Perhaps, underlying those “cool reasons,” Ward, who knew him so well, had detected the latent feeling which made him add, as he told the story to his wife, “it will be a very pretty tour.”

Henceforth the news from Canada became a regular topic in his letters. “I had the pleasure to hear

from your son Samuel the 26th of September," he writes to Governor Ward on the 16th of October. "He was at Fort Weston, just going to set off on their journey. All in health and good spirits. By several letters from Quebec, things wear a promising appearance there. If the expedition succeeds, and we get possession of Canada, we shall effectually shut the back door against them. And I make no doubt of keeping them from entering at the front." In December it was "reported that Quebec was taken. General Montgomery and Colonel Arnold will acquire immortal honor. O that we had plenty of powder! I should then hope to see something done here for the honor of America." And two days later he writes to his brother Jacob: "Letters were received this day from General Montgomery, near Quebec. He says he expects to be master of the place in a very little time. He has powder and all kind of military stores to facilitate the reduction. He and his troops are in good health, and he speaks very highly of Colonel Arnold and his party. Many officers and a large number of privates belong to our government."

Towards the end of October another event occurred to call his attention to other parts of the country. News came in the night of the 23d that Falmouth had been burned, and that, by orders from England, "all the seaport towns on the continent that would not lay down and deliver up their arms, and give hostages for their future good

behavior," were to be burnt also. "The city of New York," it was said, "was already in ashes."

This was startling news for a Rhode-Islander, whose whole State was a seaport town. He immediately sent off an express to Governor Cook, a firm, active, intelligent man, heartily devoted to the cause, who had succeeded the half Tory Wanton as Governor. "By these accounts we may learn what we have to expect. I think Newport should be fortified in the best manner it can be. Doubtless the enemy will make an attempt to get the stock of the island. Provision should be made to defeat them. Death and desolation seem to mark their footsteps. Fight or be slaves, is the American motto. The first is by far the most eligible."

But now the absorbing subject was the new army. Whence was it to come? How was it to be raised? Must all these men whom we have been trying so hard to teach leave us just as they are beginning to become soldiers?

In November he writes that "the troops enlist very slowly in general." And on the 10th of December: "I was in hopes that ours would not have deserted the cause of their country. But they seem to be so sick of this way of life, and so homesick, that I fear the greater part and the best of the troops from our Colony will go home. The Connecticut troops are going home in shoals this day. Five thousand of the militia, three from this Province and two from New Hampshire, are called

in to take their place. There is a great defection among their troops, but from the spirit and resolution of the people of that Province, I make no doubt they will furnish their proportion without delay. New Hampshire behaves nobly; their troops engage cheerfully. The regiment raised in the Colony of Rhode Island has hurt our recruiting amazingly. They are fond of serving in the army at home, and each feels a desire to protect his own family."

"I harangued the troops yesterday, and hope it had some effect. They appear of a better disposition to-day. Some have enlisted and others discover a complying temper. I leave nothing undone or unsaid that will promote the recruiting service. But I fear the Colony of Rhode Island is upon the decline. There have been, and now are, some unhappy disputes subsisting between the town and country interest, and some wretches, for the sake of a present popularity, are endeavoring to widen the breach,—to build up their own consequence to the prejudice and ruin of the public interest. God grant that they may meet with the disgrace they deserve!"

"This Province begins to exert itself. The General Court has undertaken to provide for the army wood, etc. Their troops begin now to enlist very fast. They are zealous in the country to engage in the service.

"I sent home some recruiting officers, but they got scarcely a man, and report there are none to

be had there. No public spirit prevails. I wish you and your colleague were at home a few days to spirit up the people. Newport, I believe, from the best intelligence I can get, is determined to observe a strict neutrality this winter, and in the spring join the strongest party. I feel for the honor of the Colony, which I think in a fair way, from the conduct of the people at home and the troops abroad, to receive a wound. It mortifies me to death that our Colony and troops should be a whit behind the neighboring governments in private virtue or public spirit.

Eight days pass, and he writes more cheerfully. "The army is filling up slowly. I think the prospect is better than it has been. Recruits come in out of the country plentifully, and the soldiers in the army begin to show a better disposition and to recruit cheerfully."

The question of bounties comes up. "You entreat the general officers," he writes to Governor Ward, "to recommend to Congress the giving of a bounty. But His Excellency General Washington has often assured us that the Congress would not give a bounty, and before they would give a bounty they would give up the dispute. The cement between the Northern and Southern Colonies is not very strong if forty thousand lawful will induce the Congress to give us up.¹ . . . Do you think we

¹ In March, 1776, Reed writes to Washington from Philadelphia: "Many attempts have been made to get a bounty for the New England troops, but without effect. The Congress are resolved that you shall aban-

should hesitate a moment to recommend a bounty if we felt ourselves at liberty to do so? We should then have an opportunity of picking the best men, filling the army soon, keeping up a proper discipline, and preserving good order and government in camp; while we are obliged to relax the very sinews of military government and give a latitude of indulgence to the soldiery incompatible with the security of either camp or country. . . . There is nothing that will encourage our enemies, both external and internal, like the difficulties we meet in raising an army. If we had given a good bounty and raised the troops speedily, it would have struck the ministry with astonishment to see that four colonies could raise such an army in so short a time. They could not expect to conquer a people so united, firm, and resolutely determined to defend their rights and privileges. But from the difficulties we meet with, the confusion and disorder we are in, the large number of soldiers who are going home, our enemies will draw a conclusion that we are like a rope of sand, and that we shall soon break to pieces. God grant it may not be the case!"

He thinks that Congress was mistaken also in "sending strangers at so critical a period, . . . to establish the plan for the constitution of the new army. . . . History does not afford so dangerous a

don the lines and give up their coun- enlisted here." — Sparks's Corre-
try to be ravaged if they will not spondence of the Revolution, Vol.
defend it on the same terms as those I. pp. 164, 165.

measure as that of disbanding an old army and forming a new one within point-blank shot of the enemy. The task was rendered very difficult by the reduction of eleven regiments and the discharge of such a number of officers who have done everything to obstruct and retard the filling the new army in hopes to ruin the establishment and bring themselves into place again."

The 31st of December was the "last day of the old enlisted soldiers' service. "Nothing but confusion and disorder reign. We are obliged to retain their guns, whether private or public property. They are prized and the owners paid; but as guns last spring ran very high, the committee that values them sets them much lower than the price they were purchased at. This is looked upon to be both tyrannical and unjust. I am very sorry that necessity forces his Excellency to adopt any measures disagreeable to the people. But the army cannot be provided for in any other way."

Thus discontented and disgusted, many of the old soldiers went home. But people at home looked upon the matter in another light. "The Connecticut troops went off in spite of all that could be done to prevent it. But they met with such an unfavorable reception at home that many are returning to camp already. The people on the road expressed so much abhorrence at their quitting the army, that it was with difficulty they got provisions. I wish all the troops now going home may meet with the same contempt."

He looks anxiously to the morrow. “We never have been so weak as we shall be to morrow when we dismiss our old troops.” And in anticipation of this, he had taken advantage of the last days of their service to strengthen “the hill, in order that, if the soldiery should not engage as cheerfully as we expected, I might be able to defend it with a less number.”

The new year opens. A communication comes from the enemy, with the king’s speech, denouncing war and confiscation and death. And shortly after a new flag rises on “Mount Pisgah,” the red field crossed with thirteen stripes, and above it a union. Thirteen guns salute it as it unfurls to the breeze, and thirteen rounds of cheers from the troops of the “citadel.”¹

The British look out from Boston and hail it as the signal of submission, in which they are soon to be sharply undeceived. The coming and going, the tumult and confusion, the deep anxiety of those who knew their danger and kept silent, the long, fixed gazing at Bunker Hill and the Roxbury lines, the straining of eye and ear through the long winter night for some sign of the enemy’s coming, — for surely he must know their weakness and be prepared to profit by it, — made the next three days pass very slowly. But on the 4th Greene draws a long breath: “I this day manned the lines upon this hill, and felt a degree of pleasure that I have not felt for several days. Our situation has

¹ Frothingham, p. 283.

been critical. We have no part of the militia here, and the night after the old troops went away I could not have mustered seven hundred men, notwithstanding the returns of the newly enlisted troops amounted to nineteen hundred and upward." He adds,— and you can fancy him as he writes it pausing a moment to look out upon Bunker Hill and Boston, where the general who had permitted this golden opportunity to escape him was wasting his strength in useless cannonades,— "I am now strong enough to defend myself against all the force in Boston."

Meanwhile the army had been in great straits for supplies. They had begun to suffer from cold as early as September. "Excuse the badness of the writing; it is so cold I cannot feel the pen," he writes to Sullivan on the 23d. "We have suffered prodigiously," he writes in December, "for want of wood. Many regiments have been obliged to eat their provisions raw for want of fuel to cook it, and notwithstanding we have burnt up all the fences and cut down all the trees for a mile round the camp, our sufferings have been inconceivable. The barracks have been greatly delayed for want of stuff. Many of the troops are yet in tents, and will be for some time, especially the officers. The fatigues of the campaign, the suffering for want of wood and clothing, have made a multitude of soldiers heartily sick of service."

An alarm of small-pox, too, came to increase their apprehensions. It was known to be in Bos-

ton, and it was said the enemy were trying to introduce it by emissaries into the American camp.¹ A strict system of fumigation was established, and everybody coming from Boston was compelled to submit to it before he was allowed to enter the lines.² Greene remembered his first visit to New York, and how he had had himself inoculated at a time when most men still shrank from inoculation as impious, or condemned it as ineffectual. And now, faithful to his early convictions, he urged the adoption of immediate measures for inoculating the army, and gave up, it has been said, his house at Coventry for a hospital for the officers.³

It was a happy day for him when his wife joined him in camp. Mrs. Washington came to headquarters about the same time. Other officers were joined by their wives, and that pleasant custom began, which was continued throughout the war, of giving to winter quarters as much as possible the air of home. His official relations with Washington grew more and more intimate as circumstances revealed the harmony of their opinions. Sometimes Washington, who really loved a jest, would slyly remind him of his Quaker origin. "Go to General Greene; he is a Quaker, and knows more about it than I do," was his answer to Moses

¹ Washington to President of Congress. — Sparks, Vol. III. p. 188.

² The late venerable President Quincy told me that this fumigation was almost his earliest boyish recollection.

³ I have added an expression of doubt to this statement, having no authority for it but Johnson, whom, with all his opportunities for oral as well as written information, I find it necessary to use with care.

Brown, who had been sent to Cambridge upon some business in which the Quakers were particularly interested.¹ His social relations, too, were upon the pleasantest footing. His wife was fond of society and well fitted to shine in it, notwithstanding the comparative seclusion of her early years. And an intimacy sprang up between her and Mrs. Washington which, like that between their husbands, ripened into friendship, and continued unimpaired through life. His first child, still in the cradle, was named George Washington, and the second, who was born the ensuing year, Martha Washington.

And now this long siege began to draw to a close. In January, Knox had reached camp with a fine train of artillery, which, by a rare display of energy and judgment, he had succeeded in bringing from Ticonderoga. All winter long the Americans had been counting upon the ice for "a passage into Boston." Early in February the weather set in cold and sharp. Preparations were made for an attack. Greene was sick with jaundice. "I am as yellow as saffron," he writes to his brother Jacob on the 8th, "my appetite all gone and my flesh too. I am so weak that I can scarcely walk across the room. But I am in hopes I am getting something better. I am grievously mortified at my confinement, as this is a critical, and will be to appearance an important, period of the American war. Cambridge bay is frozen over; if the weather

¹ Mr. Brown told me this himself, a few years before his death.

continues a few days longer as cold as it has been a few days past, it will open a passage into Boston. Sick or well I intend to be there, if I am able to sit on horseback." Like Washington, he believed that an attack might succeed. But the weather changed before the attempt could be made.

All the heights round Boston had been occupied except Dorchester. To seize this was like forcing the enemy to fight, for it commanded the bay and shipping; and this Washington was now about to do. Preparations were made rapidly and secretly. By the opening of March all was ready. To draw off the enemy's attention from the point of danger, the Americans began to fire from Cobble Hill, Lechmere Point, and Lamb's Dam. The British returned the fire. On the 2d of March "there was an almost incessant roar of cannon and mortars all night long."¹ A thirteen-inch shell reached Prospect Hill and burst there, though with little damage.² A ball from the American ranks struck Brattle Street Church, in the wall of which it still remains imbedded. On the night of the 4th the cannonade was renewed, forming an almost unbroken line of fire. For miles round the "houses were shaken," and "windows rattled with the roar," hundreds of anxious hearts "beating pace"³ with the cannon all through the weary night. When day came, people gathered on Penn's Hill "to hear the amazing roar of cannon" and

¹ Heath, p. 39.

³ Mrs. Adams's Letters, pp. 68, 69.

² *Ibid.*

watch the flight of shells, seeing distinctly “every shell that was thrown.” “Oh!” said they, “how many of our dear countrymen must fall.”¹

What does all this mean, thought the English, as they looked out from their strong works,—their Bunker Hill, which Montresor had made impregnable, and the battery at Fox Hill, and the old and new lines that cut off the approach by Roxbury. Do the rebels hope to burn the town, and shell us out? But when the morrow came,—the anniversary of that 5th of March on which British troops had first fired upon their New England brothers,—through the gray haze of morning they saw Dorchester heights covered with redoubts. “The rebels have done more in a night than my whole army could have done in a month,” exclaimed Howe; and knowing well that, if they were allowed to hold their ground, his fleet would be driven from the harbor, he made immediate preparations for an attack. Washington, on his side, anticipating one, prepared to meet it, by sending Putnam, with four thousand men, in two divisions, to attack the city on the water side. Greene, with the second division, was to “land at Barton’s Point, or rather to the south of it,” secure Copp’s Hill, and then joining the first division, under Sullivan, help him force the works at the Neck, and let in the troops from Roxbury.² Both divisions were drawn up near Fort No. 2, half a mile in front of the Cambridge lines, and about three quarters of a mile

¹ Mrs. Adams’s Letters, *ut sup.*

² Force, Archives, Vol. V. p. 110.

from Putnam's quarters, in the large house, still standing, near the the main street of Cambridgeport. He was there, the rough old wolf-hunter, whom men believed in, though they had not yet seen him fully tried; Sullivan, too, "not very suddenly moved, but when once roused, not very easily lulled";¹ and Greene, with thoughtful brow and glowing eye. Right before them lay the Charles, not now winding in silence through the meadows,² but all astir with the din of preparation and covered with boats, three huge floating batteries among them, and flatboats that would hold forty men each. And beyond the broad tract of lowland, and broader tract of bay on their left, they could almost see the martyr city,— the bristling cannon, the redoubts, the strong lines, Mount Horam, where the grenadiers lay in wait for them, and Beacon Hill, rising serenely in the background. They knew that hundreds of eyes were looking out anxiously from housetop and steeple, and every point which could give a glimpse of the bay. It was under the gaze of all these eyes that they were to row right up to those black embrasures. The slow hours passed heavily. Noon, and no signal yet from Roxbury steeple; no pendant on Prospect Hill. Messengers come and go. Some of them must have brought word from Dor-

¹ Mrs. Adams Letters to J. Adams, p. 65.

² The reader will recall Longfellow's beautiful lines to this beautiful stream: —

" River that in silence windest,
Through the meadows, bright and free,
Till at length thy rest thou findest,
In the bosom of the sea."

chester, that the British troops were preparing to enter their boats, and the ships were all in line to cover the landing, and take part in the assault. Some, too, may have told how Washington had ridden in among the men, and bidden them remember that this day was the anniversary of the massacre.

One of the clock. The church-bells are all gone, or you would have heard their clear voices ring it out; but the heart hears them, and bounds at the remembrance of their profanation. And thus day passes, and night closes in dark and ominous upon unfulfilled expectations. And as the night, too, wears on, the wind rises fast, irresistible. Even the Charles feels it, and is agitated between its narrow banks. But down in the bay it is lashing the waters into waves and curling crests of foam. God has put forth his own hand; there is nothing left for man to do but to watch with awe the manifestation of Omnipotence;¹ no more roaring of cannon and hurtling of shells through the air, but the howling of the wind, and the impetuous dash of rain. The propitious tempest continued all next day.

On the following night a Captain Erving succeeded in making "his escape out of Boston," and brought word "that the British were preparing to leave the town."² But what will become of it

1 "That this most remarkable interposition of Providence is for some wise purpose I have no doubt." — Washington to his brother. Sparks, Vol. III. p. 341.

² Heath, p. 41.

meanwhile, in the hands of disappointed and im-bittered men? There were still anxious days and nights, especially among those who¹ did not know, as Washington and his generals knew, that their work was nearly done. On the 13th a council was held at General Ward's quarters at Roxbury,— Washington, Ward, Putnam, Thomas, Sullivan, Heath, Greene, Gates being present. They decided that, if the town were not evacuated the next day, they would fortify Nook's Hill. The British still lingered; and, wearied with their loitering, Washington brought things to an immediate decision by fortifying Nook's Hill. Howe had no choice but to flee, or drive the Americans from their stronghold, or see his ships sunk at their moorings. On the 19th, soon after sunrise, boats filled with soldiers and citizens were seen putting off from the wharves, and when the sun set the city was once more in the hands of its own people.

¹ Mrs. Adams writes on the 7th: it is wise and just; but from all the "I feel disappointed. This day our muster and stir, I hoped and expected militia are all returning without effecting more important and decisive results." — Mrs. Adams's Letters, p. 69.

CHAPTER V.

Perplexing Conduct of the Enemy. — Fortifications of Boston. — Greene in Command of the City. — Letter to Colonel Nightingale. — Thursday Lecture. — Marching Orders. — Alarm in Rhode Island. — March to New York. — Preparations for Defending the City. — Greene appointed to command Fourth Brigade. — Command on Long Island. — Fortifications. — Alarm Signals. — Tories. — John Jay. — Gouverneur Morris. — Reconnoitring with Knox. — Forts Washington and Independence. — Brigade and Regimental Reports.

IT was not without some doubts of the enemy's intentions that Washington saw their fleet still linger in the lower bay. They had begun the war, it was true, by a capital error, allowing themselves to be cooped up in a place of little strategic importance, when by occupying New York and seizing the passes of the Hudson, they might, almost without firing a gun, have cut off the communication between the Eastern and Middle States, and secured their own communication with Canada. There was but little doubt that this was now their object, and Heath had already been sent on with his brigade the day after the evacuation. But might not the British general, before he struck this blow, attempt with his concentrated forces a parting blow at the Americans in their new position?¹ Therefore Washington continued to watch

¹ Washington's Orders, MSS., order of the day for March 24.

Howe's movements, holding his own troops well in hand and preparing himself for either contingency. The command of the city was given to Greene.¹ "General Greene," say the orders of the day for the 24th, "will dispose of the regiments in Boston to the best advantage." And next day "the wagon-master and companies of carpenters in Boston are to receive and obey all such orders and directions as Brigadier-General Greene shall think proper to give."² And thus the time passed feverishly on till the 27th, when the fleet made sail and stood out to sea.

Two years before, the British troops had given Greene important lessons in minor tactics by their daily exercises on the Common, and now they left a still more important lesson behind them in their works in the city and on Bunker Hill.³ It is easy to conceive the interest with which he viewed them. Fortification was the only chapter in the art of war which he had thus far studied practically; and here was an illustration of it far surpassing anything he had ever seen. But of his feelings at the triumph in which he had borne so honorable a part no record has been preserved. Our last glimpse of him was on the 5th of March, waiting on the banks of the Charles for the signal to embark. Our next is on the 24th, at his quarters in the redeemed city, writing to Colonel Joseph

¹ See Wilkinson, Mem., pp. 1-33. enemy left all their works standing

² Order-book, MSS.

³ Washington gives his impressions in a letter to his brother: "The in Boston and on Bunker Hill, and formidable they are." — Sparks, Vol. III. p. 343.

Nightingale of Providence. “Rhode Island has as good troops as are on the continent; there are many excellent under officers; for God’s sake don’t let the whole be defeated and dishonored for want of a commander. You have it in your power now to distinguish yourself, to your own honor and to your country’s glory. Let not your private interest defeat the public expectation. The eyes of the people are upon you. Make a noble sacrifice of your private interest to the public good; and give the world a convincing proof that you are more *social* than selfish, and that the happiness of your country is a greater object with you than the increase of wealth.”

On the 28th, too, he must have been with “Washington and the other general officers and their suites,” when they marched in procession from the council-chamber “to the old brick meeting-house, preceded by the sheriff with his wand, and attended by the members of the council who had had the small-pox, the committee of the House of Representatives, the selectmen, the clergy, and many other gentlemen,” to attend the reopening of the Thursday Lecture, which the Bostonians of that day regarded as a sacred bond connecting them with their remotest ancestors; for, except during the last three months of the English occupation, it had never been interrupted since the foundation of their city. And now “an excellent and well-adapted discourse was delivered from Isaiah xxxiii. : ‘Look upon Zion, the city of our

solemnities ; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down ; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.' " And when the sermon was over the procession formed again in the same order and marched back to the council-chamber, and from the council-chamber to " the Bunch of Grapes tavern, where an elegant dinner was provided at the public expense, after which many proper and pertinent toasts were drank." " Joy and gratitude," says the contemporary record, " sat in every countenance and smiled in every eye."¹

On the next day marching orders were issued for Monday, April 1st, at sunrise. " Varnum's, Hitchcock's, Little's, Reed's, and Bailey's regiments," say the orders of the 29th of March, " to march on Monday morning at sunrise. Brigadier-General Greene will take the command of this brigade. Deputy Quartermaster-General Park will provide the necessary teams, and the Commissary-General will deliver the provisions for the march. The Adjutant-General will give the marching orders to the colonel commanding the divisions. The field officer of regiments and captains of companies will be answerable for any damage done to the barracks upon their men's moving out ; therefore it behooves them to see that no wanton destruction is committed, as they will be charged with a sum sufficient to

¹ Pennsylvania Evening Post, April of the Revolution, Vol. I. pp. 226, 9, 1776, quoted in Moore's Diary 227.

pay for repairing the mischief done." A detachment from Knox's artillery was added to complete the brigade; and, to guard against the inconveniences which Heath's men had suffered on the road,¹ each colonel was to receive "a warrant for five hundred pounds, lawful money, upon application at headquarters."² The route lay through Providence to New London, where transports were to meet the troops and convey them to New York.

But before they were well on their way came an express from Governor Cooke, saying that "a ship of war had arrived in the harbor of Newport, and that twenty-seven ships, undoubtedly having the ministerial troops on board, were within Seconnet Point." Greene was ordered to hasten his march, and a messenger despatched to Sullivan, who with six regiments was on the road to Norwich, to direct him to file off towards Providence.³ It might be but a feint. "The enemy have the best knack of puzzling people I ever met with in my life," Washington had written Reed⁴ while watching the fleet in Boston Bay, and this might be a stroke of the same game. But a sharp blow dealt at Rhode Island would be felt everywhere, and counteract, in part, the injurious effects of the evacuation of Boston. So Greene pushed on, little doubting that the tide of war was turning towards

¹ Heath's letter to President of Congress. Force's Archives, Vol. V. p. 775.

² Order of the day for March 30. Force's Archives, Vol. V. p. 757.

³ Force's Archives, *ut sup.*

⁴ Sparks's Washington, Vol. III. p. 330.

his own home, and that he might soon have to fight under the eye of his own people.

But the whole country was in a state of feverish alarm, dreading an attack at almost every vulnerable point of its long coast; and while all were in this frame of mind, three soldiers looking seaward from a hill below Newport had mistaken the undulations of the fog for the sails of the hostile fleet. A messenger had been immediately despatched to the Governor at Providence, and the Governor, a man of decision, had sent the urgent tidings to Washington at Boston. But being also a man of forecast, he had sent at the same time a trusty messenger to Newport to verify the report. Much writing and much riding it may seem to us, with our telegraphs and steamboats and railroads; but it took a night and a day to spread the alarm, and another night and day to contradict it.¹ And then, while the militia-men laid by their knapsacks and guns, and the farmers went back to their fields, and the merchants drew long breaths, Greene was free to hold on his way towards New London, scarcely turning aside for a glance at Coventry and Potowomut as he passed along the familiar roads. But the roads were heavy with the spring thaw, and the people not always ready to help with their teams when the baggage-horses gave out. It was his first march with troops, and easy as it would have seemed two or three years later, it must have seemed hard to him then. At New London he met

¹ Bartlett, *Rhode Island Colonial Records*, Vol. VII. p. 506.

his old acquaintance, Commodore Hopkins, in the full flush of his expedition to New Providence, and his fight with the Glasgow. Here, too, he found the transports that were to convey him and his brigade to New York. Before he was ready to sail, Washington passed through on his way thither by the shore road. The night he sailed a snow-storm came on, dispersing his little fleet, and not without danger of shipwreck.¹

On the 17th,² when he reached New York, he found Washington earnestly engaged in his preparations for defence; completing the works that had already been laid out, and preparing new ones. The King's ships, "instead of lying within pistol-shot of the wharves, and their sentries conversing with ours, while they received every necessary that the country afforded,"³ were driven down to the Hook, and their intercourse with the inhabitants cut off. It "was hard times for quiet people."⁴ New York was no more "the gay, polite place it used to be esteemed, but it was become almost a desert, unless for the troops."⁵ Disaffected citizens, whose number was large, thought it an odious restraint upon their freedom, that they were required to be within doors by a stated hour, or provide themselves with a pass.⁶

On the 24th, the regiments were brigaded anew,

¹ Force's Archives, Vol. V. p. 943. ⁴ Moore's Diary of the Revolution, Sparks's Washington, Vol. III. p. 314. ² Vol. I. p. 230.

Heath, p. 45.

³ Sparks's Washington, Vol. III. p. 376. ⁵ Force's Archives, Vol. V. p. 1167.

Letter from Rev. John Carroll.

⁶ Force's Archives.

and Greene put in command of the Fourth Brigade, consisting of his old Rhode-Islanders, under Varnum and Hitchcock, and the regiments under Wayne, Little, and Irvine. This was the beginning of his intercourse with Wayne, whom we by and by find numbered among his friends, and whom we shall meet again by his side in Carolina, and by his death-bed in Georgia. But before this arrangement had been fully carried out, news from Canada — that department which gave Washington “more trouble and concern than his own,”¹ — made it necessary to send another reinforcement to the Northern army. Sullivan was appointed to command it, and Wayne’s and Irvine’s regiments placed under his orders. Greene’s brigade, now counted as the Third, and with Hand’s regiment, which took the place of Wayne’s and Irvine’s, numbered thirteen hundred and seven men in all fit for duty, although they counted as seventeen hundred and sixty-one on the rolls. With this force he was ordered “to encamp, to-morrow morning at ten o’clock, on the ground marked out upon Long Island.”²

A broader field now opened before him, with a wider range of duties and a greater weight of responsibility. Although the enemy had not yet made his appearance, there could be little doubt that the line of the Hudson was his object, and that part of the first blow, if not the whole

¹ Reed to Robert Morris. *Life, &c.* ² Order of the day for April 30. of President Reed, Vol. I. p. 200. Force’s Archives, Vol. V. p. 1152.

weight of it, would fall upon Long Island. To prepare for this was his first duty,—a duty so similar to that of the last campaign, that, as he made his daily rounds among the works, and daily revolved in his mind his means of defence, and the possibility of strengthening them, it must have seemed to him as if he had been merely applying the lessons of that campaign to a new field.

Of the many wants of our army, there was none greater or more deeply felt than the want of scientific engineers. Gridley, whom Washington had been taught to look upon as “one of the first engineers of the age,”¹ had proved sadly wanting in energy, and was still slowly carrying out the new plans for the defence of Boston.² Rufus Putnam had given proof of talent and energy, but was deficient in scientific training. The works at Cambridge had been “planned by a few of the principal officers of the army, assisted by Mr. Knox, a gentleman from Worcester.”³ “I have but one,” writes Washington, in June, “on whose judgment I should wish to rely in laying out works of the least consequence.”⁴ Greene’s taste for mathematics was too much akin to these studies not to give them a scientific as well as a practical interest in his eyes. But the first idea of the works at Brooklyn was suggested by Lee,⁵ and it is impossible to determine with certainty how far

¹ Sparks’s Washington.

⁴ *Ut sup.*, p. 427.

² Ibid.

⁵ Sparks’s Correspondence of the

³ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. III. Revolution, Vol. I. p. 158.
p. 138.

his plans were changed, or how fully they were carried out by his successors. Still, very little had been accomplished when Greene took the command, and all that was done after the 1st of May belongs to him. "The rebel works were judiciously planned, but ill executed," said Captain Montresor, one of the most skilful of the British engineers, in his examination before a Parliamentary committee.¹ However this may be, they saved the American army.

Brooklyn at that time, or Brookland as General Greene often calls it, might be regarded as a narrow peninsula, separated from the main body of Long Island by Wallabout Bay, a broad indenture on the north, and Gowanus or Gowan's Cove and Creek, which ran deep into the land from the south. Thus the land line was reduced to little more than a mile and a third, presenting, as it were, a natural front to an enemy and resting both flanks on the water. Within this line, and on the heights near the water, Lee had built a redoubt, by means of which, in conjunction with a battery on the Manhattan side, he hoped to secure the entrance of the East River. He had also chosen the site for two other redoubts, thus forming an "intrenched encampment" large enough for three thousand men.² Upon this basis Greene began his work. Near the Wallabout, where are now Fort Greene and Washington Square, stood a wooded

¹ Quoted by Reed. *Life and Correspondence of President Reed*, Vol. I. pp. 224, note.

² *Sparks's Correspondence of the Revolution*, Vol. I. pp. 153-158.

hill commanding a water range of a little over a mile, from Wallabout Bay to Corlear's Hook, and a land range which covered the two principal roads from the interior of the island. On this he built Fort Putnam, a redoubt with five guns, and cutting down the trees, brought the roads under the fire of his guns. The approaches on the north were secured by an intrenchment running in a northwesterly line down the hillside to the brink of the Wallabout. Another zigzag intrenchment connected it with Freek's Millpond, a body of water at the head of Gowanus Creek; and, to make this entrenchment, already so well protected by the nature of the ground, still easier to defend, he strengthened it by another redoubt of five guns, half-way between the millpond and Fort Putnam. This, proper names being the order of the day, he named, or some one named for him, Fort Greene. Near the head of the creek, and still within the peninsula, was another high hill, called Cobble Hill by the English settlers, but Ponkiesberg by the Dutch. On this a third redoubt was built, armed with three guns and strengthened by an intrenchment which, running spirally down the cone-shaped hill, procured the works the characteristic name of the Corkscrew Fort. Between this fort and Gowanus Cove was Box-hill Fort, a fourth redoubt; and two more small redoubts, one on the slope of Bergen Hill and one near the Jamaica road, and a little south of Fort Putnam, completed the lines of defence on the land side. On the water side a strong

guard was stationed at Red Hook, where works had already been thrown up, and another at Governor's Island, half-way between Red Hook and the Battery. Hand's regiment was stationed at the Narrows, to keep a sharp lookout from that important point, and the shore carefully patrolled ; and, to prepare himself for defending the ground between his lines and the landing-places on the coast, Greene made a careful study of it in every direction.¹

His first care was to push on his works as rapidly as his means would permit. But while part of his small force was working with the spade, large numbers were also required for guards. "I cannot safely enlarge the fatigue party," he writes in July, "without injuring the health of the people, for they are one day on and one day off duty now."

To secure the earliest intelligence of the enemy's approach, a system of signals was planned by a committee composed of Sullivan, Greene, and Stirling. "Upon the appearance of any number of ships by day, from one to six, a large flag is to be hoisted on the highlands of Neversink; upon the appearance of any number, from six to twenty, two flags, and for any greater number, three flags. These flags are to be hoisted upon flagstaffs arranged there, from east to west, at twenty yards' distance from each other. The signals by night to

¹ In the topographical part of this description I have made free use of Lossing's Field-Book of the Revolution, Vol. II. Ch. XXIII.

be given by an equal number of fires, arranged in the same order and at the same places. These signals to be reported, both by day and night, on the heights of Staten Island, by flags and fires arranged in the same manner. . . . We recommend that the day signal be given by large ensigns, with broad stripes of red and white, and that upon the appearance of three flags by day, or three fires by night, the country is to take the alarm, and communicate it as soon as possible, for the purpose of calling in the militia." A good lookout was to be kept up day and night, and in addition to the alarm by flag, "intelligence to be given by express to the Commander-in-chief."¹ The militia, by order of the Committee of Safety, had a "rendezvous appointed" for each regiment, and riders were kept in readiness, day and night, to spread the alarm.

While he was thus actively engaged in preparing to meet the open attack of an enemy from without, a less congenial vigilance was forced upon him by an enemy within. Like all her sister Colonies, New York had her full share of Tories; and on Long Island the number was so great as to give just grounds for anxiety. Should the king's troops succeed in effecting a landing, and putting themselves in direct communication with these partisans of the crown, their familiarity with the country would make them invaluable assistants in every operation of the enemy. Meanwhile, they served

¹ Force, American Archives, Vol. V. p. 1473.

as spies upon the patriot army, and as a check upon the actions of the patriot citizens. Some made no secret of their predilections ; some temporized and tried to lull suspicion ; nearly all were prepared to welcome the invading army the moment it appeared, and work covertly the while to make its landing and advance easy. And in doing this they made skilful use of exaggerated statements, false reports, malignant slanders, and all those dangerous arts which add so much to the peril and bitterness of civil war.

The part of the military arm in this matter was exceedingly delicate ; for at such moments nothing is easier than to raise the cry of despotism and military usurpation. “I will lend any aid in my power that shall be thought within the line of my department,” wrote Washington to the Committee of Safety, “to root out or secure such abominable pests of society.”¹ And with his usual judgment he continued to act as the apparent agent of the Committee, while, as with the Congress, he controlled, in a measure, and inspired their counsels by his admirable letters. Greene’s duty was, in the main, purely executive. “I send you prisoner,” he writes to the Provincial Congress on the 6th of June, “Mr. John Livingston and his barber, taken into custody by order of the committee of Jamaica, as you will see by the papers accompanying this. He was delivered by the captain of the minute company to Lieutenant-Colonel Cornwell, who com-

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. III. p. 391.

manded a detachment from this division of the army, by order of General Putnam, to Hempstead. The captain requested that he might be delivered safely into the hands of the Congress; accordingly I have sent him (Livingston) and his barber under the care of a number of officers. It is notorious that many of the inhabitants of Queen's County are very unfriendly. Arms, I am informed by the officers of my brigade, are daily carrying by the camp down into that part of the island, and the inhabitants here say they are the very people that are known to be unfriendly. I should be glad to know whether you approve or disapprove of such a practice. The officers tell me that not less than four or five hundred stand of arms have gone by the camp within a few days. I have given orders to stop all for the future until I know your pleasure."

But when the enemy came and the danger grew more imminent, it sometimes was necessary to act without waiting for the previous action of the Committee. "I shall send in," he writes to Washington, August 4th, "a list of the persons proper to be taken up on the Island."¹ On the 11th he sends a list of thirty-seven names, prepared with the aid of "Mr. Skinner, a young gentleman bred to the practice of the law, and perfectly acquainted with almost all the political characters in the Province. . . . Your Excellency will please to examine it, and if it meets your approbation, signify the time

¹ Force, Archives, 5th Series, Vol. I. p. 750.

you will have the execution take place by giving your orders on the back of the list." The day before he had "sent over nine suspected Tories to the City Hall," one of whom did "not seem to be an object worth sending away. . . . Among the others there were several insignificant characters. How extensive their influence may be I can't pretend to divine; but from their appearance they don't look like doing much mischief." The Tories, however, were upon the lookout, and, either from the suspicion natural to their position or forewarned by friends with whom old associations were more powerful than public duty, "many of them had gone off." "I wonder," Greene writes, "whether anything of this sort has been in contemplation by the Provincial Congress. It is surprising to me how it could be known."

Sometimes, with all his earnestness, he found it difficult to conduct the examination with a sober face. "I have examined the prisoners," he writes on the 27th of July, "and find them to be a parcel of poor, ignorant, cowardly fellows. Two are tailors, named John and James Dunbar, and the other two are common laborers, named Isaac Petit and Will. Smith. They candidly confess they set off with an intention of going to Staten Island, but not with any intention of joining the enemy, but to get out of the way of fighting here. I believe the true reasons of their attempting to make their escape were, there has been a draft among the militia to fill the new levies, and it was rumored

these were a part that were drawn. It was also reported they were to go into the Northern army, and that almost all that went there died or were killed. The prospect was so shocking to them, and to their grandmothers and aunts, I believe they persuaded them to run away. Never did I see fellows more frightened ; they wept like a parcel of children, and appear exceeding sorrowful. One of them is in an exceeding ill state of health, very unfit for any fatigue. I beg your Excellency's direction how to dispose of them ; they don't appear to be acquainted with one public matter ; they have been Toryish, but I fancy not from principle, but from its being the prevailing sentiment in the country.”¹

Such cases, however, were rare, and the larger part of the disaffected, as the sequel proved, were both willing and able to fight in their bad cause. Sometimes they collected in numbers. “I received information last evening,” he writes on the 27th of July, “of there being thirty or forty Tories on a little island at the entrance of Jamaica Bay. Three boats full of men were seen off there day before yesterday, but they did not land nor speak with any boats, that the guards could discover. I sent a party of sixty men to scour the island this morning, and to take all they found there prisoners.”²

Sometimes his pen has the ring of the sword in

¹ Force, Archives, 5th Series, Vol. I. pp. 621, 622. ² Force, Archives, *ut sup.*, p. 621.

it. "In obedience to the within order and warrant, I sent a detachmennt of my brigade, under the command of Colonel Vernon, to the house of the within named David Mathews, Esq., at Flatbush, who surrounded his house and seized his person, precisely at the hour of one this morning. After having made him a prisoner, diligent search was made after his papers; but none could be found, notwithstanding great care was taken that none of the family should have the least opportunity to remove or destroy them."¹

These were stern measures; but "matters," wrote Washington, "are too far advanced to sacrifice anything to punctilios. . . . My tenderness has been often abused, and I have had reason to repent the indulgence shown to them."² Lenity, indeed, was attributed to fear; but when men who, like Mathews, were suspected, upon strong grounds, of conspiring against the new government were subjected to the restraints which duty to itself and to the people compelled it to impose, they talked loudly of violated rights and injured innocence.³

But why revive these obscure details? Because I would show how the earnest, single-minded men looked upon their duty, and did it; accepting war

¹ The warrant, under date of June 21, 1776, and bearing the signatures of Philip Livingston, John Jay, and Gouverneur Morris, is given in full in Force's Archives, Vol. VI. p. 1158.

² Sparks's Washington, Vol. III. p. 452.

³ Mathews's Letters, and the reply of the New York Convention, August 28, 1776, are deserving of careful perusal. See Force, Archives, 5th Series, Vol. I. p. 1549 *et seq.*

for what it was,—the dominion of the strong hand and resolute will,—and civil war as a condition which permitted no neutrality. When the war was over, General Greene made himself many enemies, both in South Carolina and in Rhode Island, by opposing the exclusion of the Tories as impolitic in a country which required population, and unjust as punishing opinions which could no longer do harm, and which twenty years earlier had been held by Whig and Tory alike. But while the war lasted no one kept them more sternly in check than he. It was some compensation for this unpleasant duty, that it brought him into intercourse with John Jay and Gouverneur Morris,¹ leading members of the secret committee of the Provincial Congress. And it was a pleasant relief from the inspection of works already planned to ride up with other officers, or with Knox alone, and study the ground on Manhattan Island that was to become the scene of action. “I am obliged to defer going up to King’s Bridge till another day,” he writes to Knox the 29th of May, “being under obligation to go to New Utrecht this morning, and to wait on the Committee of Safety of this town this afternoon about some business. . . . I will endeavor to see you this afternoon, and fix upon some other time for reconnoitring the ground up and about King’s Bridge.” Knox, upon whom much of the

¹ Jay took a leading part in the measures against the Tories, repugnant as severity was to his feelings. See Life of John Jay, by his son William Jay, Vol. I. p. 48 *et seq.*

duty of an engineer devolved, was glad to have such a companion in his studies, and Greene, who had been early drawn towards Knox by his warm heart and sound mind, loved to be with him. Sometimes other officers accompanied them, and it was on one of these reconnoitring expeditions that "the commanding height near Morris's house" was pointed out "as a position which, if properly fortified, would be nearly impregnable." So, among others, thought Putnam. Some insisted, with Greene and Heath, that, even if it were "made as strong as Gibraltar," it would be a mere trap from which it would be impossible for the army to extricate itself, unless the high grounds above the bridge were occupied at the same time.¹ Both opinions were accepted, and Fort Washington was built on the first height and Fort Independence on the second.

At the camp before Boston, Greene's regiments had been distinguished as the best disciplined in the army. Since then many changes had taken place in the organization of his brigade, and his new troops had not yet had time to acquire the precision of the old. Still, mixing with them, and working and living together, an attachment sprang up between the new and old regiments which he carefully fostered as a means of success. He seems, too, to have fully appreciated the importance of exact and regular reports, both for preserving discipline by keeping officer and soldier constantly

¹ Heath, Mem., p. 52.

under the eye of their commander, and for enabling him, by reference to his returns, to ascertain at any moment the number and condition of his men. The state of each company was the subject of a morning report, from the corporal to every officer in the company; the state of each regiment, of a daily report from the adjutant to the commanding officer; there were daily reports of the sick and absent; provision reports every other day to the quartermaster; returns from the adjutant three times a week, and the same number of returns from the surgeon; daily reports of guards, and twice a week reports of arms and ammunition. These, with courts-martial, orders, papers, and correspondence, required a ream of paper a month for each regiment; and, much as they fell short of the completeness and accuracy introduced by Steuben, were of great service, and, when regularly carried out, must have contributed materially to lighten the burden that lay so heavy upon Washington's shoulders. Greene spared no pains to make them effective in his brigade.¹

¹ See estimate of the quantity of American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. paper necessary for each regiment I. p. 578.
of General Greene's brigade. Force,

CHAPTER VI.

Death of Governor Ward.—Correspondence with John Adams.—Tone and Character of it.—The new Army.—Difficulties in Raising and Organizing it.—Provisions for the Disabled.—Condition of the Officers.—Principles of Promotion.—Insufficient Pay of Soldiers and Officers.—Exaggerated Ideas of the Strength of the Army.—Rhode Island Declaration of Independence.—Letters to Washington.—Alexander Hamilton.—Mrs. Greene at Camp.

IT has been seen that Greene took great pleasure in writing to Governor Ward, not merely as a duty of friendship, but in order to bring his ideas upon the important questions of the day before an active and influential member of Congress. On the 26th of March Ward died of the small-pox, which was still committing its fearful ravages throughout the length and breadth of the land, decimating the army in Canada, and knocking with livid hand at the doors of the national council in Philadelphia. Some had guarded themselves against it by inoculation; but Ward, by one of those inconsistencies which we often find in the most enlightened men, felt that he had no time to be inoculated; and when the disease came, the blow was sure.¹ And thus he died, a wise, pure-minded,

¹ John Adams, in a letter to his wife, says: "We have this week lost a very valuable friend of the Colonies in Governor Ward of Rhode Island, by the small-pox, in the natural way. He never would hearken to his friends, who have been constantly advising him to be inoculated ever

earnest man, whose merit Congress recognized so fully, that, in committee of the whole, although coming from the smallest of the Colonies but one, he was almost constantly called to the chair; an early advocate of independence, although he did not live to take a part in the final discussion; a firm believer in the happy issue of the war, although he was not permitted to witness even the evacuation of Boston; one whose innate uprightness and steadfast loyalty to truth and honor were soon greatly missed in Congress, and whom Rhode Island could ill spare, in shaping the path that was to lead her from the insulation of Colonial life to her higher destiny as a member of a great and indissoluble Union.

Greene felt the loss keenly; for to whom could he now tell his thoughts and feelings upon all these great questions, without reserve? For a while he wrote with much fulness and freedom to John Adams, whose acquaintance he would naturally have made at Cambridge the preceding autumn, if indeed he had not already known him during that earlier period of the contest in which Adams took so prominent a part. The character of his letters is still the same,—a close, careful study of the situation, and an earnest search after the remedy. The army is still foremost in his thoughts,

since the first Congress began. But he would not be persuaded. But in a letter of January 7, to his daughter Deborah, Governor Ward writes: “I am not likely to get time to — Letters of John Adams to his Wife, be inoculated.”
p. 92.

for it is by the army that the controversy is to be decided. And how to fill its ranks, and to keep them full, is still the prominent question; for it was well known that the enemy had filled theirs by means which showed that they had no scruples about bloodshed. Nothing could have brought out in a stronger light England's utter ignorance of the American character, than her employment of foreign mercenaries in enforcing unconstitutional acts; and from the hour in which the first Hessian put his foot upon American soil, a return to the affectionate relation of parent and child became impossible. Still, while the under-current was setting more decidedly towards independence, there were many things on the surface to make thoughtful men anxious.¹ There could be no question about the result, if all the resources of the country were developed; but Greene had watched the course of Congress too closely, and knew too much about its internal dissensions, not to entertain serious doubts about its power to develop those resources seasonably and effectively. One great opportunity of securing an army for the whole war had been permitted to slip by unheeded. Was there sufficient ground for believing that the mistake would not be repeated?

“The peculiar situation of affairs,” he writes on the 26th of May, “renders it necessary to adopt

¹ In our general acceptance of the doctrine of independence, we too often forgot that such men as John Dickinson and Robert Morris thought the declaration of it premature.

every measure that will engage people in the service." But the people had already discovered that there was a vast difference between sitting on committees of safety or discussing questions in Congress and working upon intrenchments or facing the enemy in the field. "If I am to form a judgment of the success of recruiting," he says in the same letter, "from what is past, the time is too short to raise the troops and be in readiness to meet the enemy; and as every argument has been made use of upon the present plan of recruiting to engage people in the service, there must be some new motive added to quicken the motions of the recruiting parties. From the approaching danger, recruiting will grow more and more difficult. If the Congress was to fix a certain support upon every officer and soldier that got maimed in the service, or upon the families of those that were killed, it would have as happy an influence towards engaging people in the service, and inspire those engaged with as much courage, as any measure that could be fixt upon. I think it is nothing more than common justice, neither; it puts those in and out of the army upon a more equal footing than at present. I have not time to add anything more. Major Frazier is waiting for this; the desperate game you have got to play, and the uncertainty of war, may render every measure that will increase the force and strength of the American army worthy consideration."

Adams agreed with him about the justice of the

measure, but doubted its acceptance by Congress. "I could wish," writes Greene on the 2d of June, "the Congress to think seriously of the matter, both with respect to the justice and utility of the measure. Is it not inhuman to suffer those that have fought nobly in the cause to be reduced to the necessity of getting a support by common charity? Does not this militate with the free and independent principles we are endeavoring to support? Is it not equitable that the States who received the benefit should be at the expense? I think it would be right and just for every government to furnish their equal proportion of troops or contribute to the support of those that are sent by other Colonies. Can there be anything more humiliating than this consideration to those that are in the army, or to those that have a mind to come in it, than this? If I meet with a misfortune, I shall be reduced to the necessity of begging my bread. On the contrary, if there were a support established, what confidence would it give to those engaged, what encouragement to those that are not. Good policy points out the measure; humanity calls for it; justice claims it at your hands." He regards "the dispute as in its infancy," and urges that "nothing should be neglected to encourage people to engage or to render those easy, contented, and happy that are engaged. Good covering is an object of the first consideration. A few troops, well accommodated, healthy

and spirited, will do more service to the State that employs them than a much larger number that are sickly, dispirited, and discontented. This is the unhappy state of the army at this time, arising from the badness of the tents."

He calls Adams's attention also to the condition of the officers, whom he terms "the very soul of an army," for "the activity and zeal of the troops entirely depends upon the animation given them by their officers. . . . The field officers in general, and the colonels of regiments in particular, think themselves grievously burthened upon the present establishment; few, if any, of that rank that are worth retaining in service will continue, if any dependence is to be made upon the discontent that appears." One of their grievances was "the necessity of acting as factors of the regiments, . . . drawing from the Continental stores by wholesale, and delivering out to the troops by retail," greatly to the loss "of such as were bad accountants." This, says he, "is no part of the duty of a colonel of a regiment, and (from) the mode in which the business has been conducted, too much of their time has been engaged in that employment for the good of the service." He proposes as a remedy that "there should be an agent for each regiment to provide the troops with clothing on the easiest terms."

Another cause of complaint was the insufficiency of their pay. "They say, and I believe with too much truth, that their pay will not defray their

expenses. . . . The dispute begins to be reduced to a national principle, and the longer it continues the more will that idea prevail. People engaged in the service in the early part of the dispute without any consideration of pay reward; few, if any, thought of its continuance; but its duration will reduce all that have not independent fortunes to attend to their family concerns." Novelty may attract new men to the service, if the present officers quit it, but that will not make up for "the injury the army sustains by the loss of every good officer. A young officer, without any experience in the military art and knowledge of mankind, unless he has a very uncommon genius, must be totally unfit to command a regiment."

There was still another cause of uneasiness,—a recent resolve of Congress on which every officer looked with feelings that might easily be worked up to a violent explosion. "I observe in the resolves of Congress they have reserved to themselves the right of rewarding by promotion according to merit; the reserve may be right, but the exercise will be dangerous. (Of) two persons of very unequal merit, the inferior may get promoted over the superior, if a single instance of bravery is a sufficient reason for such promotion. There is no doubt but it's right and just to reward singular merit; but the public applause accompanying every brave action is a noble reward. . . . When one officer is promoted over the head of another, if he has spirit enough to be fit for ser-

vice, it lays him under the necessity of quitting it; it is a public intimation that he is unfit for promotion, and consequently undeserving his present appointment. For my own part, I would never give any legislative body an opportunity to humiliate me but once. I should think the General's recommendation is necessary to warrant a promotion out of the regular channel."

Nor were the common soldiers without just grounds of uneasiness, as they looked forward to the continuance of the war. "The emission of such large sums of money increases the price of things in proportion to the sums emitted. The money has but a nominal value. The evil does not rise from a depreciation altogether, but from there being larger sums emitted than is necessary for a circulating medium. If the evil increases, it will starve the army; for the pay of the troops, at the prices things are sold at, will scarcely keep the troops decently clothed."

With all his sympathy with Mr. Adams's zeal, he was not without some doubts of the soundness of his judgment. He could not shut his eyes to the lessons which a year in the midst of the army, and a year's observation of Congress, had sternly forced upon him. He had seen the enthusiasm which, in a few days, brought together an army of nearly twenty thousand men, speedily evaporate in the daily routine and daily hardships of camp. He had seen a second army slowly and painfully collected; had seen how difficult it was to arm them,

how hard it was to supply them with powder ; how burdensome their food, clothing, and pay were becoming ; he knew that there were jealousies and dissensions in Congress, divisions and animosities among the people ; he knew that the favorable moment for securing men for the war had been allowed to pass by unimproved, and that it would soon become necessary to begin the tantalizing labor of enlistment over again ; he saw a paper money unsupported by taxes rapidly spreading over the country, and obstructing the channels of healthy commerce. And, seeing these things, he could not but recognize in them an element of failure, which it behooved thoughtful men to take calmly into consideration, and, instead of indulging themselves in delusive hopes, to meet it by a prompt and judicious application of all their resources.

“I observe,” he continues, in the same letter, “that you don’t think the game you are playing as desperate as I imagine. You doubtless are much better acquainted with the resources that are to be had in case of any misfortune than I am ; but I flatter myself I know the history, state, and strength of this army as well as any in it, both with respect to the goodness of the troops or the abilities of the officers. Don’t be too confident ; the fate of war is very uncertain ; little incidents has given rise to great events. Suppose this army should be defeated, two or three of the leading generals killed, our stores and magazines all lost ; I would not be

answerable for the consequences that such a stroke might produce in American politics."

Exaggerated ideas of the strength and condition of the army had been spread through the country,—ideas which it was very desirable to give the enemy, but very dangerous for our own people to entertain; for it not only led them to relax their exertions, but served to foster expectations which, as they could not be fulfilled, became the ground of dangerous suspicions and unjust complaint. "You think," continues Greene, "the present army, assisted by the militia, is sufficient to oppose the force of Great Britain, formidable as it appears on paper. I can assure you it's necessary to make great allowances, in the calculation of our strength, from the establishment, or else you'll be greatly deceived. I am confident the force of America, if properly exerted, will prove superior to all her enemies, but I would risk nothing to chance; it is easy to disband when it is impossible to raise troops. If the force of Great Britain should prove near equal to what it has been represented, a large augmentation will be necessary; if the present offers should not be sufficient to induce people to engage in the army, you will be obliged to augment the bounty, and perhaps at a time when that order of people will have it in their power to make their own conditions, or distress the state."

In what light Greene viewed his correspondence with Adams appears in a letter of July 14:—

“ I received your letter of the 22d of June : if it was necessary for you to apologize for not writing sooner, it is necessary also for me. But, as the express conditions of my corresponding with you was to write when I had time, and leave you to answer at your leisure, I think an apology is unnecessary on either side. But I can assure you, as you did me, that it is not for want of respect that your letter has been unanswered so long.

“ I am glad to find you agree with me in the justice and propriety of establishing some provision for the unfortunate. I have not had time to fix upon any plan for that purpose, but I will write you more fully in my next. I have never mentioned the matter to but one or two particular friends, for fear the establishment should not take place. The troops’ expectations being once raised, a disappointment must necessarily sour them. On the other hand, if the Congress established a support for the unfortunate unsolicited, it must inspire the army with love and gratitude towards the Congress for so generous an act.

“ You query whether there is not a want of economy in the army amongst the officers. I can assure you there is not among those of my acquaintance. The expenses of the officers runs very high, unless they dress and live below the gentleman. Few that have ever lived in character will be willing to descend to that. As long as they continue in service they will support their rank ; if their pay is not sufficient, they will draw on their private fortunes at home. The pay of the soldiers will scarcely keep them decently clothed. The troops are kept so much upon fatigue that they wear out their clothing as fast as the officers can get it. The wages given to common soldiers is very high, but everything is so dear that the purchase of a few articles takes their whole pay. This is a general complaint through the whole army.

“ I am not against rewarding merit, or encouraging

activity; neither would I have promotions confined to a regular line of succession. But every man that has spirit enough to be fit for an officer will have too much to continue in service after another of inferior rank is put over his head. The power of rewarding merit should be lodged with the Congress, but I should think the General's recommendation is the best testimonial of a person's deserving a reward that the Congress can have.

“ Many of the New England colonels have let in a jealousy that the Southern officers of that rank in the Continental establishment are treated with more respect and attention by the Congress than they are. They say several of the Southern colonels have been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, but not one New England colonel. Some of them appear not a little disgusted. I wish the officers in general were as studious to deserve promotion as they are anxious to obtain it.

“ You cannot more sincerely lament the want of knowledge to execute the business that falls in your department than I do that which falls in mine; and, was I not kept in countenance by some of my superior officers, I should be sincerely disposed to quit the command I hold in the army. But I will endeavor to supply the want of knowledge as much as possible by watchfulness and industry. In these respects I flatter myself I have never been faulty. I have never been one moment out of the service since I engaged in it. My interest has and will suffer greatly by my absence, but I shall think that a small sacrifice if I can save my country from slavery.

“ You have heard long before this reaches you of the arrival of General and Admiral Howe. The General's troops are encamped on Staten Island. The Admiral arrived on Friday last. A few hours before his arrival two ships went up the North River amidst a most terrible fire from the different batteries. The Admiral sent up a

flag to-day, but, as the letter was not properly addressed, it was not received. The Admiral laments his not arriving a few days sooner. I suppose he alludes to the Declaration of Independence. It is said he has great powers to treat, as well as a strong army to execute.

“I wrote you some time past I thought you was playing a desperate game. I still think so. Here is Howe’s army arrived, and the reinforcements hourly expected.

“The whole force we have to oppose them don’t amount to much above nine thousand, if any. I could wish the troops had been drawn together a little earlier, that we might have had some opportunity of disciplining them. However, what falls to my lot I shall endeavor to execute to the best of my ability.”

It has already been seen that, as early as October of the preceding year, Greene was anxious for a declaration of independence. Rhode Island, without waiting for the action of Congress, made her declaration in May.¹ Greene welcomed it with exultation. “By a letter from Governor Cooke,” he writes to a friend on the 14th, “covering a late act past last session in your government, you have declared yourselves independent. ’T is nobly done. God prosper you, and crown your endeavors with success.”

While the army lay before Boston, his daily communications with Washington left little room for correspondence. But now his letters grow more frequent, showing not only how intimate the relations between them had become, but what a wide range his thoughts had taken, and how ear-

¹ Arnold’s Rhode Island, Vol. II. p. 372.

nestly he labored to do his duty, even in its minute details.

“I beg leave to recommend to your consideration,” he writes to Washington on the 5th of July, “the establishing a certain guard at Red Hook. It is undoubtedly a post of vast importance. Detached guards never defend a place equal to troops stationed at a particular post. Both officers and men contract an affection for a post after being there some time; they will be more industrious to have everything in readiness, and more obstinate in defence. The little baggage that each private has is of consequence to him, and will influence his conduct in time of action if it is at stake. The officers also will have new motives; they, knowing a post to be committed to their trust, and that the whole disgrace will fall upon them if any misconduct happens, will be much more likely to take every necessary precaution to avoid so great an evil. But an officer that commands a detachment thinks little more than how to pass away his time during his tour of duty, it being uncertain whether he shall ever command there again.”

Is there not something in this of the man who had studied Locke carefully, and trained himself betimes to trace human actions to their spring? On the 11th, he calls Washington’s attention to another subject, and in this letter, too, displays the same instinctive tendency to combine close observation with broad generalization.

“I was mentioning, some few days past, that

a putrid fever prevailed in my brigade, and that I thought it partly owing to their feeding too freely on animal food. Vegetables would be much more wholesome ; and, by your Excellency's permission, they may be provided for the troops, without any additional expense to the Continent, if the colonels of the regiments were allowed to retrench in the article of meat, and that they should draw its value in money, to be applied by the quartermaster of the regiment to the procuring necessary sauce, the quartermaster to draw the money weekly, and to account to the commanding officer of the regiment how it is expended, and for what. This method may be a little more troublesome to the commissary-general and the quartermaster of the regiment ; but if it will remedy so great an evil as now prevails, I think it worthy your Excellency's attention. The troops cannot complain that they are scanty in their allowance ; leaving them at liberty to draw either meat or money, as the inclination of the troops or commanding officer may lead them, puts it out of their power to complain. People often would adopt measures, when left to their choice, that they would think a hardship to have imposed upon them.

“ Cleanliness contributes much to the health of the troops. They now do and have done so much fatigue, that the allowance of soap will not keep them clean. Their clothing gets exceedingly dirty, and they wear out twice as many clothes on fatigue as doing other duty. I should think it a piece of

justice due to the troops, for the extraordinary fatigue, to be allowed a double quantity of soap when they are employed so much on fatigue. This is a grievance I have often heard the officers complain of, that the fatigue wore out the troops' clothing faster than they could get them, and that they made themselves so dirty at work that the allowance of soap would not clean them.

“I have never mentioned anything of a further allowance of soap to any person, except the other evening at head-quarters. I only beg leave to propose it to your Excellency's consideration, and leave it for your better judgment to determine the propriety and utility of such an establishment.”

“I wrote to your Excellency yesterday morning,” he writes on the 18th, “that I thought it would be an advisable measure to have Cobble Hill fixed upon to give notice, by the fire of two or three guns, that the enemy had landed on this island. Colonel Cary wrote me an answer to that proposition that your Excellency had no objection. If it is to alarm the camp on your side, it should be mentioned in general orders, that the guards may govern themselves accordingly. I don't want it to alarm this camp; what I proposed it for was, to give your Excellency earlier intelligence than could be done by express, and the express to follow with the particulars. I submit it to your Excellency's further consideration.”

A letter of the 25th gives us a glimpse of him at his desk: a little, mahogany desk it was,—it

is before me now,— a foot and a half wide by a foot deep, with a sloping lid scarce large enough to hold the foolscap sheet on which he usually wrote, and which, lifting like the lid of a school-desk, shows within a small oblong space in front, and, in the back part, four neat little drawers, and a space between them divided by a shelf. The table it stood on then was covered with passes, which he was signing,— dull, tedious, unprofitable work for a general officer, but which must nevertheless be done.

“ I am so confined writing passes, &c., that it is impossible for me to attend to the duties of the day, which in many instances prejudices the service. Such a confined situation leaves one no opportunity of viewing things for themselves. It is recommended by one of the greatest generals of the age, not only to issue orders, but to see to the execution; for, the army being composed of men of indolence, if the commander is not attentive to every individual in the different departments, the machine becomes dislocated, and the progress of business retarded.

“ The science or art of war requires a freedom of thought and leisure to reflect upon the various incidents that daily occur, which cannot be had where the whole of one’s time is engrossed in clerical employments. The time devoted to this employment is not the only injury I feel, but it confines my thoughts as well as engrosses my time. It is like a merchandise of small wares.

“I must beg leave to recommend to your Excellency’s consideration the appointing an officer to write and sign the necessary passes. The person I should wish to appoint is Lieutenant Blodget. If it was put in general orders that passes signed by him should be deemed authentic as if signed by me, it would leave me at liberty to pursue the more important employments of my station.

“I hope your Excellency will not think this application results from a lazy habit, or a desire to free myself from business,—far from it: I am never more happy than when I am honorably or usefully employed. If your Excellency thinks I can promote the service as much in this employment as in any other, I shall cheerfully execute the business without the least murmur.”

On the 28th, he closes a report with another suggestion for the comfort of his men. “The new levies that come in hanker after milk and vegetables. I should think that it would benefit the service to allow all the regiments to draw one third the value of the animal food in money, to purchase milk, &c., and direct in the most positive terms the quartermasters to provide it for the men.”

A letter of the 3d of August gives us another kind of glimpse of him, and not so pleasant a one; for it reveals, at the same time, one of the abuses of our imperfectly organized army, and he is somewhat angry. “General Heard gives furloughs to the troops of Colonel Foreman’s regiment. I

conceive it to be capitally wrong, and very injurious to me and Colonel Foreman both, as neither can know what to depend upon if the troops are furloughed without our knowledge or consent. This is not the only evil; for if the troops are refused the indulgence here they request, and get it elsewhere, it will naturally lead them to form an opinion that we are tyrannical. I must beg your Excellency to put a stop to it immediately."

Two days later he takes up the subject of regimental hospitals. "There is no proper establishment for the supplying the regimental hospital with proper utensils for the sick. They suffer, therefore, for want of proper accommodation. There is repeated complaint upon this head. The regimental hospitals are and ever will be rendered useless, nay, grievous, unless there is some proper fund to provide the necessary conveniences. The general hospital cannot receive all the sick, and those that are in the regimental hospitals are in a suffering condition. If this evil continues, it must greatly injure the service, as it will greatly dispirit the well to see the sick suffer, and prevent their engaging again upon any conditions whatever. Great humanity should be exercised towards those indisposed. Kindness, on one hand, leaves a favorable and lasting impression; neglect and suffering, on the other, is never forgotten.

"I am sensible there has formerly been great abuses in the regimental hospitals; but I am in hopes in general men of better principles are

elected to those places, and that the same evils will not happen again. But the continent had better suffer a little extraordinary expense than the sick should be left to suffer for want of those conveniences that may easily be provided.

“I would beg leave to propose that the colonels of regiments be allowed to draw moneys to provide the regimental hospitals with proper utensils; an account of the disbursements weekly or monthly to be rendered. This will prevent abuse and remedy the evil. Something is necessary to be done speedily, as many sick are in a suffering condition.”

It is evident from these letters that Greene had studied his situation carefully, and that his reflections upon the events that were passing around him were fast taking the shape of principles. His knowledge had been enlarged by observation upon a wider field, but the habit of mind was still that habit of firm, bold, but careful withal and patient, thought which he had formed for his own guidance long before he dreamed of the use it would one day be put to. And it is in this light that the study of his letters becomes so important; ever bearing in mind that what may now be gathered from text-books in a few hours, required then the observations of more than one campaign, and a vigorous mind to reason upon them. There are few of his letters which, however trifling the immediate occasion, do not reveal the workings of an active and powerful mind.

With such qualities, he could not but take a deep interest in the profession that brought them into play. Without loving war, without ever closing his eyes to its horrors, he found in its intense excitement a kind of stern delight,— the delight of the strong man in putting forth his strength. It called out all his faculties, and put all his energies to task; revealing to himself, as well as to others, capacities of which he had been altogether unconscious. And with the growth of this feeling grew another feeling, its natural attendant. Military fame was within his reach. The work that he was helping to do would some day furnish material for history, and, as he asked himself what place his name was to hold in that history, he felt unwonted longings rise within him. “Let my name stand fair for the inspection of inquiring friends,” he had written in the first weeks of the war. But now those friends were no longer the little village circle, but the leaders of the nation; and to stand fair with them was fame. Thus, too, he naturally became sensitive about promotion and rank, as the expression of public approbation. The light in which he viewed promotion has already been seen from his letter of the 2d of June to John Adams. It is expressed still more fully in a letter of May 21st to Washington, and is the more deserving of attention inasmuch as he found himself, in the course of the next year, compelled to act upon it in a manner which has been greatly misinterpreted.

“ From the last accounts from Great Britain, it

appears absolutely necessary that there should be an augmentation of the American forces; in consequence of which, I suppose, there will be several promotions. As I have no desire of quitting the service, I hope the Congress will take no measure that will lay me under the disagreeable necessity of doing it. I have ever found myself exceeding happy under your Excellency's command. I wish my ability to deserve was equal to my inclination to merit. How far I have succeeded in my endeavors, I submit to your Excellency's better judgment. I hope I shall never be more fond of promotion than studious to merit it. Modesty will forever forbid me to apply to that house for any favors. I consider myself immediately under your Excellency's protection, and look up to you for justice. Every man feels himself wounded when he finds himself neglected, and that in proportion as he is conscious of endeavoring to merit attention. I shall be satisfied with any measures that the Congress shall take that have not a direct tendency to degrade me in the public estimation. A measure of that sort would sink me in my own esteem, and render me spiritless and uneasy in my situation, and consequently unfit for the service. I wish for nothing more than justice, either upon a principle of merit or rank, and will at all times rest satisfied when your Excellency tells me I ought to be. I feel myself strongly attached to the cause, to the Continental Congress, and to your Excellency's person; and I should consider it a great

misfortune to be deprived of an opportunity of taking an active part in the support of the one, and in the promotion of the other. But, should anything take place, contrary to my wishes, which might furnish me with a sufficient reason for quitting the service, yet I will not do it until the dangers and difficulties appear less than at present."

It was not, however, until August that the new appointments were made, when four new major-generals were chosen, his name still coming last on the list. Although independence had already been declared more than a month, and but seven days before, all the members had set their names to the Declaration in solemn session, his new commission, like his brigadier's commission of the preceding year, still ran in the name of the United *Colonies*. Unlike that, however, it bears the date both of the month and the year. On the 12th, his promotion was announced in general orders, and Nixon's and Heard's brigades were put under his command. One of the first benefits that he experienced in the possession of a higher grade was the lightening of that clerical burden which had pressed on him so heavily, for he was now entitled to two aids. "I have made choice," he writes on the 15th, "of Mr. William Blodget and Major William Livingston for my aides-de-camp. Should it meet with your approbation, you will please to signify it in orders."

I have already spoken of his growing intimacy with Knox. About this time he laid the foundation of another friendship, which, like that with

Knox, was to grow stronger year by year, and end only with life. Duty as well as inclination often called him to head-quarters ; and his way from the ferry led him through the Park, then open ground, and frequently used for drills and parades. One day, on passing through it, whether in coming or in going the tradition does not tell, his attention was attracted by the soldierly appearance of a company of young artillerists, and particularly by the air and bearing of their commander, who, though but a boy in size, went through his duty with the precision of a veteran. When the parade was over, Greene sent to compliment the young officer on his proficiency, and invite him to dinner. The invitation was accepted ; and thus began that intercourse with Alexander Hamilton which, founded on a just appreciation of each other's talents, perfect confidence in each other's motives, equal devotion to the cause in which they were engaged, and a singular harmony of opinions upon all the great questions involved in it, was a source of strength and happiness to both.

During part of the spring and summer his wife was with him in camp. Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Knox were with their husbands at the same time, and the pleasant intercourse of Cambridge appears to have been kept up between them all,—dinner being still a favorite mode of bringing them together. “ General Greene and lady present their compliments to Colonel Knox and his lady, and should be glad of their company to-morrow at din-

ner, at two o'clock," says a note dated Thursday evening, eight o'clock, and still preserved among the Knox papers. But as the active business of the campaign began, the ladies turned their faces homeward, and little time or inclination was left for even these brief hours of social enjoyment. "Mrs. Washington left the city," is the entry for the 30th of June in Heath's Diary.

CHAPTER VII.

Enemy's Ships begin to arrive at the Hook. — Constant Watching.— Alarms in the Country. — Tories. — Threatened Duel in Greene's Division. — English Fleet at the Narrows. — Arrival of the Hessians. — Hitchcock's Regiment. — Militia. — First Marching Orders.— Removal of Cattle and Grain. — Dangerous Illness. — Carried to New York. — Battle of Long Island.

ABOUT this time ships began to drop into the Hook, "three or four" a day,¹ and on the 29th of June a hundred and twenty sail of topsail vessels cast anchor there. Henceforth Greene's eye will be ever on them, watching their slightest movements. "The general officers were in council," writes Heath on the same day. The Americans lie on their arms all the night of the 2d of July.² On the 5th four prisoners are brought in; and from them Greene gains the first accurate estimate of the enemy's force, which he immediately transmits to Washington. "The people of Staten Island," he writes, "went on board the fleet as they lay at the Hook, several boat-loads of them." A warning this, that, unless he kept sharp watch, the people of Long Island would do the same at the earliest

¹ Sparks's Washington, Vol. III. here." — Reed to Mrs. Reed, 1st Ju-
p. 443. ly, Life, &c. of President Reed,

² Heath, p. 48, "Mrs. Washington Vol. I. p. 194.
and the other ladies are gone from

opportunity. “Our people are firing with nine-pounders at the Narrows, but have not heard whether they have done any execution. There was a smart fire heard at the west end of Staten Island about four this morning. It is supposed to be an attack upon Fort Smith, in the south part of Staten Island.”

On the 11th four more sail are seen standing in for the Hook, two ships, a brigantine, and a schooner. The fleet lies idly at anchor; but from time to time a few vessels detach themselves from the main body, as if to perplex the Americans, either dropping down seaward, or “cruising about the bay.” On the 17th the enemy are seen to be intrenching on the heights of Staten Island. “I was down at the Hook about sunrise,” he writes on the 18th, “and saw a sloop stretching down towards the Narrows. . . . Our out-guards suspect there are spies about the camp. The sentries have fired half a dozen times a night the three preceding nights.” With Tories all round and an open enemy, whose ships can bring him, in a couple of hours, close up to your works, this watching and counting new enemies as they come in is nervous business. And nervous, too, it is for the poor wives and daughters, and on the main-land as well as on the island. “We have our coach standing before our door every night, and the horses harnessed, ready to make our escape if we have time,” writes one of them, a daughter of John Morin Scott. “We have hardly any clothes to wear; only a second change.” Then

an alarm comes in the night, in the midst of a thunder-storm, and they hurry off, making their way towards the interior as best they may. But at last they are “ obliged to stop on the road and stay all night, and all the lodging (they can) get (is) a dirty bed on the floor. How hard it seems for us, who have always been used to living comfortably!”¹

The enemy increases. At two o'clock on the 21st seven more large ships are seen coming up from the Hook toward the Narrows; and a negro brought in by the rifle-guard reports that on Staten Island eight hundred negroes are to be formed into a regiment that very day. And the next day, when those ships of yesterday have come to anchor, soldiers are seen on board of them,—men “in the Highland habit,” the comrades, perhaps, of those Highlanders who, to His Majesty's great “hurt and surprise, had had the misfortune to fall into the hands of the enemy,” giving Greene a closer view of the Highland habit than he could get now.²

But now the wheat is a-ripening in the fields along the Utrecht and Gravesend shores, and he would not have it fall into the hands of the enemy, “for everything they destroy or carry off will be a matter of triumph.” “I apprehend,” he writes, “that an order of Congress will be necessary for its removal.” He wants, also, Washington's opinion

¹ Extracts from a letter from a daughter of General J. M. Scott, in Lossing's Field-Book of the Revolution, Vol. II. p. 599.

² Force, Archives, Vol. VI. p. 1055; and 5th Series, Vol. I. p. 1102.

upon his preparations of defence. "I should be exceeding glad," he writes on the 25th, "if your Excellency would visit this post, when at liberty, to see if there are any alterations or further regulations necessary."

But all the trouble does not come from the enemy and the Tories. His own officers make him some, and very foolishly. Lieutenant Dunworth, discharged a few days before from Little's regiment, had challenged Captain Talbot, of Varnum's. A hint of the quarrel had reached Greene beforehand, and he had already spoken to Washington of the possibility of its coming to a challenge; wishing, however, "to know nothing about it." But when the challenge had actually been sent and accepted, and he was known to have been informed of it, he was "not a little perplexed, knowing duelling to be against all laws, both civil and military," and yet feeling, apparently, that the question of personal courage was so involved in it that it would be difficult to prevent it. He did prevent it, however, though by what means I do not know, and Talbot's life was preserved for better things.

Meanwhile his eyes still turn anxiously seaward. At five in the afternoon of the 27th eight sail are seen standing in for the Hook, too far off as yet to discern what they are, but they have the look of transports. This was Friday. Sunday, at noon, ten more sail are descried in the offing, and next morning it is discovered that the enemy are stronger by thirteen ships than they were at sunset. In the

night signal-guns were fired,—a thing which had never been done before; and, after the guns, “a considerable noise and movement of the boats was heard.” Listening, still other sounds come floating on the damp night-air,—sounds of “confusion and hurry.” Perhaps the enemy have heard of the fire-ships, and are peering into the darkness up the bay, as we are down it.

Two days pass without further change. On the evening of the 30th two ships come in late; and then, on the morning of the 1st of August, thirty sail are discovered standing in for the Hook. All through the long forenoon you might have seen them coming grandly on, with their white sails trimmed as none but men-of-wars-men know how to trim them, and the black muzzles of a thousand guns frowning sternly from their sides. At four they are off the New Utrecht shore, and pilots hurry down to meet them.

Who are they? The Hessians, doubtless, and every American feels his blood boil, and grasps his firelock firmly, as he repeats the name. But no! not quite yet. It is only Clinton returning from Carolina, with Greene’s future antagonist, Cornwallis; returning, too, not in triumph, though still haughty and confident.

But there is other cause for alarm. “The troops are in general exceeding sickly, great numbers taken down every day. If the state of the army will admit of a reinforcement at this post, perhaps it may be prudent. If it does not, I will do the

best I can with what I have.”¹ In the evening he goes down to the Narrows, and counts the ships for himself. From the uniforms, the troops seem to be the guards and artillery. “If your Excellency has leisure, perhaps it may be worth while to pay a visit to the Narrows, and to reconnoitre and view the fleet.”

And still the eye turns towards the eastern horizon. Twenty-one more sail heave in sight on the evening of the 3d. By morning eight were in, the rest coming in. In the night “the enemy’s guard-boats patrolled much higher up the bay than usual.” We want “a couple of guard-boats to patrol from Red to Yellow Hook, across the bay leading to Rapelye’s,” if they can be spared from other patrolling and guarding. If not, he will do as he will do about the reinforcements,—make the best use of the means he has; vigilant, not rashly confiding, but with no questionings about the path of duty.

Wednesday, the 7th, comes. The day passes off without change; but at nine in the evening “Colonel Varnum reports, from Red Hook, as many as a hundred boats coming from Staten Island to the ships, full of men.” Three ships, too, were observed going towards the Narrows, having first taken in thirty boat-loads of soldiers. Everything seems to indicate a general embarkation. The cloud is about to burst.

Not quite yet; but, gathering other clouds to

¹ Letter of August 1.

itself, and growing darker every hour, it yet hangs with a deepening menace on the horizon. The three ships, with their thirty boat-loads of soldiers, are still at the Narrows on the 10th. "I was at Red Hook this morning about three o'clock," he writes. It is a dangerous place, with its dank, miasma-laden air, for a man born and bred in the pure air of Rhode Island, but it affords a sight that almost repays the risk; for there, in the gray morning twilight, lies the English fleet, just within the Narrows,—two hundred vessels in all, "seven of the largest drawn up in a line nearly two miles advanced of the rest,"¹ presenting a dim confusion of spars and hulls at first, but which, as day advances and the mists roll away to seaward, grows every moment more distinct, till the masts and rigging of the nearer ships come out in mazy lines upon the kindling sky, while the great mass farther down paint their dark outlines upon it like a forest in winter, stern and bare.

Another night passes, but not silently, for the booming of guns is heard. The Hessian fleet, surely! Morning brings no answer; but three ships lie at the Hook, and a large schooner, hoisting her sails, stretches up from the watering-place towards Amboy. Last evening, too,—the evening of the 11th,—a twenty-gun ship came up, and, firing as she passed the Narrows, the "Admiral" fired in return. And now four ships run down, and cast anchor off the New Utrecht shore; and,

¹ Letter of Aaron Burr, Force, Archives, 5th Series, Vol. I. p. 887.

far off at sea, we can count twenty-five sail more — ships all of them, apparently, coming in as fast as the wind can drive them through the water.

Here, then, they are, at last, these dreaded Hessians, hirelings of blood and pillage ; here they are, looking out, from those thronged decks, on our lovely fields, and revelling already in fancy in their work of desolation. Ah ! call them victims, rather, poor, deluded victims, of greedy masters, — driven, many of them, at the point of the bayonet ; lured, some of them, by lies and misrepresentations ; and some drawn away by the errors of an age when it was still held honorable to sell your sword and blood, without pausing to consider whom or what you were to trample down. There is old De Heister, grown gray in his bloody trade. He had drooped during the long fourteen weeks of sea-life, but now, as he sniffs the land breeze, his spirits revive, and he quaffs full glasses of his native Rhennish to the health of his friends. Rahl is there, with the warm blood flowing freely through his veins at the sight of firm land and green trees. It will flow faster still next Christmas night, on the snows of Trenton. And Donop is there, too ; one more year and less than three short months, and he will faintly murmur, as the death-film gathers in his eyes, “I die the victim of my ambition, and of the avarice of my sovereign.” Yes, count your gold, landgraves and dukes, — thou of Hesse-Cassel, and thou, too, of Brunswick, — good English guineas, unclipped and sound within

the ring ; send out into your streets and lanes, into the roads and highways, and gather in your human cattle for the shambles. History has taken note of you all ; and perhaps, even before your account is given in, you will find that it is God's work that is doing here, and you are not on his side.¹

On the 14th the Hessians are seen landing on Staten Island in great numbers ; they parade on the beach, happy to feel solid ground under their feet once more, and then march up the hill towards the flagstaff ; some zealous Captain Manuel, perhaps, rejoicing in the prospect of "a steady drill." But the weather grows thick and stormy. Nothing is heard or seen on the 15th. Yet a passage in to-day's orders gives Greene more uneasiness than the enemy. Hitchcock's regiment, which has been with him from the beginning, which is so well drilled, so carefully disciplined, which keeps its arms in such good order, which knows the ground so thoroughly, and has so "peculiar an attachment to the old regiments," is to be taken from him, and "strangers to the ground," who, if they are like most of the troops that come over, "are undisciplined, and badly furnished with arms," are to take its place. He had counted upon these men : they and the regiments they had so "long been acquainted with," who were "not only attached to each other, but to the place, would support each other, in time of action," as strangers, or mere

¹ For a full view of this interesting subject, see Kapp's " Soldaten- handel deutscher Fürsten nach Amer- ica."

acquaintances of a day, could not be expected to do. "If it can possibly be dispensed with, and absolute necessity does not require their removal," he would wish them to stay.

Then the militia, notwithstanding the "promise of the lieutenant-colonel," did not come in. "Should they delay coming in any longer than this day, I am determined not to be trifled with, and shall let them feel my resentment by vigorous and spirited exertions of military discipline, and those powers with which I am invested." A part of the militia, however, had joined him, under Colonel Smith, and to him he had issued, on the 9th, his first marching orders, charging him to "send out scouts and parties to gain intelligence. If the enemy should make their landing good on any part of the island, and hear of your coming, they may send out a party to interrupt your march. Keep good front, flank, and rear guards, to prevent being surprised."

But the "troops appear to be in exceedingly good spirits," and he has "no doubt but that, if the enemy should make their attack there, he would be able to render a very good account of them." Meanwhile he is "carrying into execution the late resolve of Congress, respecting the removal of the cattle, dismantling of the mills, removing the grain already threshed, and having that which is still in sheaf so stacked and disposed of that, in case of an attack, it may easily be destroyed."¹

¹ Force, Archives, 5th Series, Vol. I. p. 967.

It is true that these daybreak and evening rides in that unwholesome air have not been taken with impunity ; he is “ confined to his bed with a raging fever,” but “ hopes, through the assistance of Providence, to be able to ride, before the presence of the enemy may make it absolutely necessary.” His aid — W. S. Livingston — writes for him the 16th, and it may have been a comfort to him to know that there was “ no appearance of any immediate preparation for an attack.” Still the fever increases. “ I am sorry to inform your Excellency,” writes Livingston, on the 17th, “ that General Greene had a very bad night of it, and cannot be said to be any better this morning than he was yesterday.”

William Blodget writes for him the next day, and in a more cheerful strain : “ The General desires me to acquaint your Excellency that he finds himself considerably better this morning ; and is in hopes, in a few days, to be able to go abroad, though still very weak.” And, rising on his pillow, Greene writes a letter himself, about a Captain Grimes, who was said to have given several indications of cowardice. On the following day a report comes in that “ five small vessels,” with troops aboard, had made their appearance at Hog Island Inlet, and two pettyaugers off Oyster Bay, — a marauding expedition in search of live-stock. He “ immediately detaches a party of horse, and two hundred and twenty men, among them twenty rifles.”

And thus the days pass on, — fever holding him down, his strong will buoying him up, till the signs

of attack become so manifest, and the danger so imminent, that Washington is constrained to send, first Sullivan, and then Putnam, to take his place, while he is carried over to the city. And there, in the house of John Inglis, in the Sailors' Snug Harbor, on what is now the northwest corner of Broadway and Ninth Street, though a quiet suburban retreat then, he lay when the battle of Long Island was fought. It was only three or four miles from the scene, and he could hear it all ; and his brother Christopher, who was with him, brought him the tidings from the field as fast as they could be gathered. When he heard how hard it had fared with Smallwood's regiment he burst into tears. Of all the anxious hearts of the next forty-eight hours, there was none more anxious than his. At last, early in the morning, comes word that the army is over the river,— the works, indeed, which he had toiled so hard to make impregnable, are lost, but men, equipage, baggage, are saved. "It was the best effected retreat I ever read of or heard of, considering the difficulties," he exclaimed, with magnanimous exultation.

"Providence took me out of the way," he writes on the 30th. "I have been very sick for near three weeks ; for several days there was a hard struggle between nature and the disorder. I am now a little better, though scarcely able to sit up an hour at a time. I have no strength or appetite, and my disorder, from its operation, appears to threaten me with long confinement. Gracious

God! to be confined at such a time! And the misfortune is doubly great, as there was no general officer who had made himself acquainted with the ground as perfectly as I had. I have not the vanity to think the event would have been otherwise had I been there, yet I think I could have given the commanding general a good deal of necessary information. Great events, sometimes, depend upon very little causes. . . . I think, from this manoeuvre, the General purposes to retreat to King's Bridge, and there make the grand stand. . . . If this is the determination, two to one New York is laid in ashes."

CHAPTER VIII.

Condition of the Army after the Battle of Long Island. — Greene convalescent. — Letter to Washington. — Council of War. — Unfortunate Decision. — Greene urges the Call of a New Council. — Decision reversed. — Retreat from New York. — Battle of Harlaem. — Greene in Command in the Jersies. — What was thought of him. — His Idea of what should be done. — Preparations for Defence. — His Opinion of Congress. — Letter to Governor Cooke. — Resolves of Congress. — Public Opinion. — Privateering. — Hospitals. — Recommendation of Officers for the New Army. — Charles Lee.

A SICK-ROOM could not hold Greene long at such a time. The retreat from Long Island, which in his judgment was a triumph of military skill binding him still more firmly to the Commander-in-chief, was, for the bulk of the army, a lucky escape, exciting only a general conviction of their inability to resist so powerful an enemy. "All is gone; the regulars must overcome," said the militia;¹ and the militia, with new levies equally worthless, formed more than a third of the army. Sickness added its depressing influence to the other causes of dejection; a fourth of the whole army, as the returns showed, being sick within nine days after the retreat. It was difficult to provide comfortably for these sick men, with the inadequate means of the general and regimental hospitals,

¹ See Gordon, American Revolution, Vol. II. p. 324.

and the incompetency in many cases, and in some the dishonesty, of the regimental surgeons;¹ and many a man who would not have feared the enemy may have felt his heart sink within him as he helped carry a comrade to the hospital or the grave, and thought how little it would take to reduce him to the same condition. Local jealousies, too, were at work undermining the imperfect beginnings of union, setting the men of one section against the men of another section, and, what was doubly dangerous, bringing out in full force the natural opposition between the democratic elements of the Eastern States and the semi-aristocratic elements of a portion of the Middle States.² The officers from Pennsylvania and Maryland and Delaware looked down with great contempt upon the officers from Massachusetts and Connecticut and Rhode Island, and, if not always without reason, — for the custom of permitting the men to choose their own officers had given many a man epaulets who was hardly fit for the ranks, — yet often with great injustice, for Knowlton was a Connecticut man, and Glover a Massachusetts man, and Hitchcock a Rhode Island man, and always with serious injury to the common cause; for how could the privates be expected to stand by each other in battle,

¹ Gordon's strong statement, Vol. II. pp. 334, 335, is confirmed by the correspondence of the time. One of them was drummed out of the army for selling recommendations to furloughs at sixpence sterling.

² Graydon's *Memoirs* contain, perhaps, the most striking expression of this feeling, in which the writer himself seems to have shared largely. See also an extract from a contemporary letter in Gordon, Vol. II. p. 331.

when the officers hated each other even more than they hated the enemy? Insubordination, desertion, cowardice before the enemy, and insolence and oppression towards their friends, were the natural fruits of these feelings,¹ heightened by the crafty insinuations of the disaffected that the leaders were seeking to save themselves by selling the army to the British.² The emergency which Greene had foretold in his letters to John Adams was come. Was he prepared to meet it?

We left him scarcely "able to sit up an hour at a time," much less to walk across the room, but already interpreting Washington's designs by his last movement. Five days pass without a record, his strength gradually returning the while; how fast or how slow we know not, or by what help of air and exercise, but so effectually that as early as the 5th we find him at his desk again, pen in hand, writing a letter to Washington, which presupposes many anxious inquiries and much anxious thought. As yet Washington's intentions were unknown; no council had been summoned, no opinions called for; but Greene could not restrain his feelings.

"The critical situation which the army is in," he writes, "will, I hope, sufficiently apologize for my troubling your Excellency with this letter. The sentiments are dictated, I am sure, by an honest mind,—a mind which feels deeply interested in the salvation of this

¹ Letter in Gordon, Vol. II. p. 332. ² Greene to Washington, September 5th.

country, and for the honor and reputation of the General under whom he serves.

“ The object under consideration is, whether a general and speedy retreat from this island is necessary or not. To me it appears the only eligible plan to oppose the enemy successfully, and secure ourselves from disgrace. I think we have no object on this side of King’s Bridge. Our troops are now so scattered that one part may be cut off before the others can come to their support. In this situation, suppose the enemy should run up the North River several ships of force, and a number of transports at the same time, and effect a landing between the town and middle division of the army; another party from Long Island should land right opposite; these two parties form a line across the island, and intrench themselves. The two flanks of this line could be easily supported by the shipping; the centre, fortified with the redoubts, would render it very difficult if not impossible to cut our way through.

“ At the time the enemy are executing this movement or manœuvre they will be able to make sufficient diversions, if not real lodgements, to render it impossible for the centre and upper divisions of the army to afford any assistance here. Should this event take place (and, by the by, I don’t think it very improbable), your Excellency will be reduced to that situation which every prudent general would wish to avoid,—that is, of being obliged to fight the enemy to a disadvantage, or submit.

“ It has been agreed that the city of New York would not be tenable if the enemy got possession of Long Island and of Governor’s Island. They are now in possession of both these places. Notwithstanding, I think we might hold it for some time, but the annoyance must be so great as to render it an unfit place to hold troops in. If

we should hold it, we must hold it to a great disadvantage.

“ The city and island of New York are no objects for us; we are not to bring them into competition with the general interests of America. Part of the army already has met with a defeat; the country is struck with a panic; any capital loss at this time may ruin the cause. 'Tis our business to study to avoid any considerable misfortune, and to take post where the enemy will be obliged to fight us, and not we them. The sacrifice of the vast property of New York and the suburbs I hope has no influence upon your Excellency's measures. Remember the King of France. When Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany, invaded his kingdom, he laid whole provinces waste, and by that policy he starved and ruined Charles's army, and defeated him without fighting a battle. Two thirds of the property of the city of New York and the suburbs belongs to the Tories. We have no very great reason to run any considerable risk for its defence. If we attempt to hold the city and island, and should not be able finally, we shall be wasting time unnecessarily, and betray a defect of judgment, if no worse misfortune attend it.

“ I give it as my opinion, that a general and speedy retreat is absolutely necessary, and that the honor and interest of America require it. I would burn the city and suburbs, and that for the following reasons. If the enemy gets possession of the city, we never can recover the possession without a superior naval force to theirs; it will deprive the enemy of an opportunity of barracking their whole army together, which, if they could do, would be a very great security. It will deprive them of a general market; the price of things would prove a temptation to our people to supply them for the sake of the gain, in direct violation of the laws of their country.

“ All these advantages would result from the destruction of the city, and not one benefit can arise to us from its preservation, that I can conceive of. If the city once gets into the enemy’s hands, it will be at their mercy either to save or destroy it, after they have made what use of it they think proper.

“ At the retreat I would order the army to take post at King’s Bridge, and post along Westchester shore, where barracks may be procured for that part of the army that are without tents. I must confess I am too ignorant of the ground to form much judgment about posting the troops. Your Excellency’s superior judgment, formed from your own observation upon the ground, will enable you to make a much better disposition than I can conceive of.

“ If my zeal has led me to say more than I ought, I hope my good intentions may atone for the offence.

“ I shall only add that these sentiments are not dictated from fear, nor from any apprehension of personal danger ; but are the result of a cool and deliberate survey of our situation, and the necessary measures to extricate us from our present difficulties. I have said nothing at all about the temper and disposition of the troops, and their apprehensions about being sold. This is a strong intimation that it will be difficult to get such troops to behave with proper spirit in time of action, if we should be attacked.

“ Should your Excellency agree with me with respect to the two first points, that is, that a speedy and general retreat is necessary, and also that the city and suburbs should be burned, I would advise to call a general council upon that question, and take every general officer’s opinion upon it.”

The same grave questions were agitating Wash-

ington's own mind. "Till of late," he had written the President of Congress on the 2d, "I had no doubt in my own mind of defending this place; nor should I have yet, if the men would do their duty; but this I despair of If I should be obliged to abandon the town, ought it to stand as winter quarters for the enemy?"¹ Greene's letter coming to him while in this mood, he called a council of general officers on the 7th, laid the situation of the army before them, and asked their opinion as to his future movements. Unfortunately, an exaggerated importance was attached to the preservation of New York. Congress had decided that if the army were compelled to leave it, "no damage" should be done it.² Even in the army some could not bear the idea of abandoning "the poor city." "The very thought gives me the horrors," wrote Colonel Malcolm to John McKesson,³ the day before the council met, and the feeling was, doubtless, largely shared by the army. But, what was far worse, it was shared by the council also, who decided by a large majority to try to hold the city with five thousand men, and post the rest of the army at King's Bridge and intermediate points. "There were some general officers," wrote Washington, "in whose judgment and opinion

¹ Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 72.

² "Resolved, That General Washington be acquainted that Congress would have especial care taken, in case he should find it necessary to quit New York, that no damage be done to said city by his troops, on their leaving it; the Congress having no doubt of being able to recover the same, though the enemy should, for a time, obtain possession of it." — *Journals of Congress*, September 3, 1776.

³ Force, Archives, 5th Series, Vol. II. p. 197.

much confidence is to be placed, that were for a total and immediate removal from the city. But they were overruled by a majority."¹ What Washington himself thought is evident from the tone of this last paragraph.

Greene left the council-room with a heavy heart, but by no means disposed to accept the decision as final, without another attempt to open the eyes of his colleagues to their danger. It was a delicate thing for the lowest major-general on the list to ask a reconsideration of the decision of a full board of general officers, and it was a still more delicate thing to collect the opinions of subordinates upon a question already discussed and determined by superiors. No man's ideas were more decided than his as to the imperative duty of subordination in an army; and in this taking counsel against a council there was something that looked very much like insubordination. But this was no time for personal considerations, or a scrupulous adherence to form and precedent; and after consulting some of the field-officers, he put into Washington's hands on the 11th a petition for a second council, signed by Nixon, Mifflin, Beall, Parsons, Wadsworth, and Scott; his own name standing at the head as the only major-general on the list.²

This was all that Washington waited for; and immediately summoning a council for the next day at General McDougall's head-quarters, the decision

¹ Sparks, Vol. IV. pp. 84, 85.

² Force, American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. II. p. 326.

of the first council was reversed with only three dissenting voices,—Spencer, Clinton, and Heath. Eight thousand men were to be left “for the defence of *Mount Washington* and its dependencies.”¹

Every nerve was now strained to remove the stores and baggage, and convey the sick to a place of greater security. But eight precious days had already been lost. On Sunday, the 15th, Howe landed between Kips’s and Turtle Bay; and in the “miserable and disorderly retreat” which followed Washington’s invaluable life was imperilled by the cowardice of Parsons’s and Fellows’s brigades; and Putnam, with three thousand five hundred men, was barely saved from capture, by the “cakes and wine” of Mrs. Murray.² “Are these the men with whom I am to save America?” cried Washington, in the bitterness of his heart.³ But in the forenoon of the next day, a skirmish of outposts gradually swelling to the proportions of a battle, the Americans drove the British from three successive positions, and withdrew, at last, voluntarily, in order to prevent the engagement from becoming general. It was Greene’s first close fight; and though he had no command in it, he went into it, with Putnam and Reed, for example’s sake, and “fought hard.”⁴ Great was the exulta-

¹ Force, *ut sup.*, pp. 329, 330.

² Gordon, *American Revolution*, Vol. II. pp. 327, 328; Greene to Governor Cooke, September 17; Ramsay, *American Revolution*, Vol. I. p. 306; Thatcher, *Military Journal*, p. 59.

³ Heath.

⁴ Greene to Governor Cooke, Sep-

tember 17, speaks of “the spirited conduct of General Putnam and Colonel Reed,” without alluding to his own share in the fight; but in a letter to Colonel H. Lee, February 18, 1782, he says, “I fought hard at Harlem.”

tion of the Americans at this proof that the British could still be made to run, and the Hessians too. But great and sincere was the mourning over the gallant Knowlton, who could ill be spared by an army which, amid its many wants, wanted most of all officers like him, whom it could look up to with respect and follow with confidence.

From the first appearance of the enemy in the waters of New York, no pains had been spared to secure New Jersey and the communications with Philadelphia. A flying camp had been established, the militia called out, and works thrown up at important points. Especial importance had been attached to Fort Constitution, on the Palisades,¹ which, it was hoped, would, with Fort Washington, on the opposite bank of the Hudson, effectually command the passage of the river, and thus secure both the country above and the crossings at the ferries. General Mercer and General Livingston had been active in all these measures, and much was justly expected from their intelligence and zeal. But the day after the fight at Harlem, Greene was ordered over to take command in the Jerseys, with his head-quarters at Fort Constitution. His detachment was composed of three brigades, — Nixon's, Clinton's, and Irvine's, — and two regiments, — Bradley's and Dey's, — the last of them militia, forming a total, on the 29th of September, of three thousand five hundred and twenty-one, rank and file, present and fit for duty, out of a body of five thousand seven hundred and seven.

¹ Washington to Mercer, September 3, Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 75.

It was a position of great responsibility, implying a confidence highly flattering to his feelings, and a well-earned reward of the zeal he had displayed from his first entrance into the army. "You have a very just idea of Greene's importance," writes Tench Tilghman, one of Washington's own staff, who was watching him from headquarters, to William Duer, who was watching him from Fishkill, as a member of the Convention's Committee of Correspondence; "he is, beyond doubt, a first-rate military genius, and one in whose opinions the General places the utmost confidence.¹ He is so near us that he can give every assistance in the way of advice; and, should the enemy relinquish their plan against the Jersey side, he can also be spared to attend in time of action." "I remember," says Colonel Pickering, "that, as I was passing the night at Providence, on my way to New York, with my regiment, in 1776, the conversation turned upon the possibility of Washington's being killed, and who, in case of such a misfortune, was best qualified to take his place. Greene, it was acknowledged by all, was the proper man."²

Everything now depended upon being able to "make a stand" before the enemy, and keep them at bay, or at least so far retard their advance as to draw out the campaign without giving them an opportunity to strike another blow like that of Long Island. "I think," Greene writes to Governor

¹ Force, American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. II. p. 870. ² Pickering MSS.

Cooke, on the 17th, "and so does his Excellency, that the operations of the campaign will have no effect upon you, as it will be impossible for the enemy to detach any part of the army while our army is able to make any stand. I would not evacuate one foot of ground (in Rhode Island), as it will tend to encourage the enemy, and dispirit our people."

In the Jerseys, as on Long Island, his task was one of sleepless watchfulness. "The enemy are landed at Powley's Hook," he writes from "Camp Fort Constitution" on the 23d. "They came up this afternoon, and began a cannonade on the batteries, and, after cannonading for half an hour, or a little more, they landed a party from the ships. General Mercer had ordered off from the Hook all the troops, except a small guard, who had orders to evacuate the place from the first approach of the enemy. General Mercer mentions no troops but those landed from the ships, but Colonel Bull, and many others that were along the river upon the heights, saw twenty boats go over from New York to Powley's Hook. This movement must have happened since General Mercer wrote. I propose visiting Bergen to-night, as General Mercer thinks of going to his post at Amboy to-morrow. I purpose to detain him one day longer."

On examining the position, he determined to hold it a few days longer, pushing forward his advanced guard "to a mill just back of Powley's Hook." But early in October he decided to eva-

uate Bergen also ; "a measure," says a letter of the time, "which will first be condemned and afterwards approved."¹ And thus, by the 5th of October, he found himself with his troops collected, and equally prepared to meet an attack on his own side of the river, or go to Washington's assistance, if needed, on the other side.

It was one of the trials of his situation, as well as of Washington's, that his confidence in the wisdom and justice of Congress had been fatally impaired. The mistakes of the first year might have been attributed to inexperience and novelty of position ; but they had all been carefully repeated in the second year, and the campaign was again wearing away without any adequate provision for the future. He could not see these things without deep anxiety ; but it was an anxiety free from any doubt about the issue of the contest, for he knew the resources of the country, he knew the character of the people, and he was confident that if those resources were properly drawn out, and that character wisely used, England would be compelled to yield.

"I apprehend," he says, in a private letter of the 28th, "the several retreats that have lately taken place begin to make you think all is lost. Don't be frightened ; our cause is not yet in a desperate state. The policy of Congress has been the most absurd and ridiculous imaginable, pouring in militia-men who come and go every month. A military force established upon such prin-

¹ Force, American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. II. p. 867.

ples defeats itself. People coming from home with all the tender feelings of domestic life are not sufficiently fortified with natural courage to stand the shocking scenes of war. To march over dead men, to hear without concern the groans of the wounded,—I say few men can stand such scenes, unless steeled by habit or fortified by military pride.

“There must be a good army established ; men engaged for the war ; a proper corps of officers ; and then, after a proper time to discipline the men, everything is to be expected.

“The Congress goes upon a penurious plan. The present pay of the officers will not support them, and it is generally determined by the best officers to quit the service, unless a more adequate provision is made for their support. The present establishment is not thought reputable.

“The Congress has never furnished the men voted by near one half, certainly by above a third. Had we had numbers we need not have retreated from Long Island or New York. But the extent of ground to guard rendered the retreat necessary ; otherwise the army would have been ruined by detachments. The enemy never could have driven us from Long Island and New York if our rear had been secured. We must have an army to meet the enemy everywhere ; to act offensively as well as defensively. Our soldiers are as good as ever were ; and were the officers half as good as the men, they would beat any army on the globe of equal numbers.”¹

When these lines were written a committee of Congress was already in camp, “to make inquiry into the condition of the army, and agree upon the necessary augmentation.” “The general officers,”

¹ Extract from a private letter. Sept. 28, 1776.

says Heath on the 26th, "were in council with a committee of Congress." And on the 27th, says the same somewhat meagre but still valuable diary, "the council sat again."¹ The result was a resolution to raise a new army without delay.

"The Congress," Greene writes a friend in Rhode Island on the 3d of October, "have ordered eighty-eight regiments to be raised for the war. This looks well. For God's sake let us have good officers from Rhode Island, if you wish to preserve its reputation. We want nothing but good officers to constitute as good an army as ever marched into the field. Our men are infinitely better than the officers. I do not speak of Rhode Island officers, for they are generally good, and behaved exceeding well in the late action. They did themselves a great deal of honor. I shall send a list to the Governor of such as deserve a preference. I think you may officer your regiment as well as any on the continent, if you will consult nothing but the merit of the man."

And, writing to Governor Cooke, on the 11th:—

"His Excellency General Washington will transmit you a list of officers, to constitute the two new regiments to be raised by your State. The most of those officers are gentlemen whose conduct has been approved by those under whom they have served. The success of the cause, the defeat of the enemy, the honor of the State, and the reputation of the army, altogether depends upon the establishing a good core, or corps of officers. My little experience has fully convinced me that, without more attention is paid by the different States in the appointment of the officers, the troops never will answer their

¹ Heath, *Memoirs*, p. 66.

expectations. I hope, as everything that is dear and valuable is at stake, that no popular prejudices nor family connection will influence the House in the appointment of the officers for the new army. I am sensible that America has as good material to form an army as any state in the world ; but without a good set of officers, the troops will be little better than a lawless banditti, or an ungovernable mob. The Americans possess as much natural bravery as any people upon earth, but habit must form the soldier. He who expects men brought from the tender scenes of domestic life can meet danger and death with a becoming fortitude is a stranger to the human heart.

“ There is nothing that can get the better of that active principle of self-preservation, but a proper sentiment of pride, or being often accustomed to danger. As the principle of pride is not predominant enough in the minds of the common soldiery, the force of habit must be called in to its aid, to get the better of our natural fears, ever alarmed at the approach of danger.

“ There has been, it must be confessed, some shameful conduct in this army this campaign, in a great measure owing to the bad conduct of the officers. I have neither seen nor heard of one instance of cowardice among the old troops, where they had good officers to lead them on. In the last action, every regiment behaved with a becoming spirit, especially Colonel Hitchcock’s and Colonel Varnum’s. I don’t wish to see an officer in the army but such as has a regard for their reputation, who feels a sentiment of honor, and is ambitious of distinguishing himself. Such will answer the public expectation, and be an honor to the State that sent him.

“ Colonel Varnum, from the treatment he has met with from Congress, has taken the resolution of leaving the army. The Colony are generally acquainted with his

abilities, (so) that he stands in no need of a recommendation. Perhaps the House may think proper to re-elect him, and give him the opportunity to refuse the appointment, as a compliment due to his party services. Colonel Cornwell and Colonel Cearey, you 'll observe, are both left out in the general arrangement. They were both in the late action, and behaved exceeding well ; but as there is a reduction of regiments, 't is not possible to accommodate the whole, and there is a preference given by the under officers, though they have never been consulted upon this occasion. His Excellency has put down only such as appears deserving, without consulting them upon the subject to know whether they would serve or not. The House will appoint such and so many of those recommended as they shall think proper, and fill the vacancies of their own choice ; but I hope there will be none in the arrangement but men of merit.

“ The several retreats and evacuations that have taken place this campaign, without doubt has alarmed the fear of the timid, and aroused their apprehension of an approaching ruin. The source of these misfortunes have originated from several causes. The strength of the enemy far exceeded the expectations of Congress ; the late season that they attempted to call in a reinforcement to our aid, the many delays that took place among the different States in furnishing their proportion, protracted the time of collecting the forces together to such a degree that, when the enemy had their whole strength together, ours, in different detachments, were very far inferior to theirs. With a force inferior to the enemy in number, with troops that were mostly raw and undisciplined, with young and ignorant officers, what could be expected against old, experienced officers, with veteran troops to command, short of what has taken place, especially when you take in the idea of the extent of ground we had to guard, and the

assistance the enemy received from their ships, owing to the situation of the posts we occupied? The militia has come and gone in such shoals that his Excellency could never tell scarcely two days together the strength he had at any one post.

“If the different States complete the establishment agreeable to the resolves of Congress, and the troops come well officered (for on that the whole depends), I have not the least doubt in my own mind but that in a few months we shall be able to seek the enemy instead of they us. I know our men are more than equal to theirs; and were our officers equal to our men, we should have nothing to fear from the best troops in the world. I do not mean to derogate from the worth and merit of all the officers in the army. We have many that are in the service deserving of the highest applause, and has served with reputation and honor to themselves and the State that sent them; and I am happy to have it to say that the Rhode Island regiments hitherto are amongst this number.”

John Hancock, too, communicates the “resolves” to the General Assembly of Rhode Island in a letter of the 9th:—

“The enclosed resolves, which I transmit in obedience to the commands of Congress, will inform you of the ample provision they have made for the support of both officer and soldier who shall enter the service during the war. The pay of the former is considerably increased; and the latter is to receive annually a complete suit of clothes, or, in lieu thereof, the sum of twenty dollars should he provide the suit for himself. This additional encouragement, besides the twenty-dollar bounty and one hundred acres of land formerly granted, the Congress

expect will be the means of engaging the troops to serve during the war."¹

But "there is a material difference," wrote Washington, "between voting battalions and raising men."² The enthusiasm with which the war began had been materially damped by hardships, disappointments, and reverses. Men no longer felt implicit confidence in the wisdom of Congress. There were already serious doubts about public credit, and the paper money which was putting it to so severe a test. Individual interests were fast resuming their control, and gaining a fatal supremacy over that devotion to the general interest with which the war began. Men of capital were thinking again of their speculations and investments; and the laborers, both in town and country, the mechanics and farmers, men by whom the ranks of the army should have been filled, were looking enviously upon the sudden gains of privateersmen, and the apparent ease with which large fortunes were made with little work. "The officers," wrote Lee, "and indeed it must necessarily be so, are of opinion that nothing impedes the recruiting of the army so much as the present rage for privateering; that, unless this is in some measure checked, it is in vain to expect any success."³ Indeed, it was difficult even for the officers to look at these sudden fortunes without

¹ Bartlett, R. I. Records, Vol. VIII., p. 31. ² Lee to Governor Cooke, Bartlett, R. I. Records, Vol. VIII. p. 55.

² Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 131.

remembering that they also had families to provide for. "This fall," writes Greene in the letter from which I just now quoted, "is the golden harvest. I think the fishing-ships at the eastward may be objects of attention this fall. In the spring, the East India ships may be intercepted on the coast of Africa. Were I at liberty, I think that I could make a fortune for my family. But it is necessary for some to be in the field to secure the property of others in their stores."

Another subject that weighed heavily upon his mind at this period was the condition of the sick; for here, as on Long Island, there were serious differences between the general hospital and the regimental hospitals, and the consequences fell heavily upon the poor soldier. After struggling with it awhile, he laid the whole matter before Congress in a letter of the 10th of October, to the President:—

"The sick of the army, who are under the care of the regimental surgeon, are in a most wretched condition; the surgeons being without the least article of medicine to assist Nature in her efforts for the recovery of health. There is no circumstance that strikes a greater damp upon the spirits of the men who are yet well than the miserable condition the sick are in. They exhibit a spectacle shocking to human feelings, and, as the knowledge of their distress spreads through the country, will prove an insurmountable obstacle to the recruiting the new army.

"Good policy as well as humanity, in my humble opinion, demands the immediate attention of Congress

upon this subject, that the evil may be sought out, and the grievance redressed. The sick in the army are too numerous to be all accommodated on the contracted plan of the general hospital. The Director-General says he has no authority by his commission to supply the demand of the regimental sick; and, the general hospital being too small to accommodate much more than one half, the remainder lies without any means of relief than the value of the rations allowed to every soldier. Many hundreds are now in this condition, and die daily for want of proper assistance; by which means the army is robbed of many valuable men at a time when a reinforcement is so exceedingly necessary. Both officers and men join in one general complaint, and are greatly disgusted at this evil, which has prevailed so long. Some measures should be taken to justify the Director-General, or to empower the Commander-in-chief to qualify him, to furnish the regimental surgeons, under the direction of the colonel of the regiment, with such supplies as the state of the sick may demand.

“ Great complaints have been made that the regimental surgeons abuse their trust, and embezzle the regimental stores committed to their care; this, among others, is a reason urged why the regimental sick suffer as they do. The surgeons, it has been said, cannot be trusted with the necessary stores.

“ Whether this complaint be well or ill founded, I am not a judge of; perhaps in some few instances it may have been the case, but I am far from thinking they are deserving the charge in general; besides which, the injury arising from a few abuses of this kind, were they even more common, is trifling compared with that which the army and public suffers in the present state of things.

“ The Director-General complains of the want of medicine, and says his stocks are but barely sufficient for the

general hospital. I can see no reason, either from policy or humanity, that the stores for the general hospital should be preserved for contingencies which may never happen, and the present regimental sick left to perish for want of proper necessaries. It is wholly immaterial, in my opinion, either to the States or the army, whether a man dies in the general or regimental hospital.

“The platform of the general hospital should be large enough to receive all the sick that are unfit to continue in quarters, or else to supply the regimental hospitals with such medicines and necessaries as the state of the sick requires.

“P. S. I do not mean to censure the conduct of the Director-General, nor to complain of his activity; but I mean to point out the defect of the present establishment, and to show the necessity of giving the Director some further power, and much more assistance, to enable him to supply the numerous wants.”

But already, the day before this letter was written, Congress had resolved,—

“That no regimental hospitals be, for the future, allowed in the neighborhood of the general hospital.

“That John Morgan, Esq., provide and superintend an hospital, at a proper distance from the camp, for the army posted on the east side of Hudson’s River.

“That William Shippen, Jr., Esq., provide and superintend an hospital for the army in the State of New Jersey.

“That each of the hospitals be supplied by the respective directors with such a number of surgeons, apothecaries, surgeon’s mates, and other assistants, and also such quantities of medicines, beddings, and other necessaries, as they shall judge expedient.”

Weekly returns to Congress and to the Com-

mander-in-chief were also ordered, and the regimental surgeons directed to send to the general hospital such of their sick as required "nurses or constant attendance," and also "to apply to the directors in their respective departments for medicines and other necessaries."¹ On the 15th, when Greene's letter was read, it was referred to the Medical Committee.

But the subject which recurred oftenest to his mind in these anxious days was the new army, and more especially the choice of officers. Governor Cooke, on receiving the call of Congress for Rhode Island's quota of two battalions, wrote to Washington for a list of the officers whom he wished to recommend for promotion, and to Greene to "give every information and assistance relating to it in his power."²

"The anxiety I felt for the honor of the State," writes Greene on the 16th from Washington's head-quarters, "and the good of the cause, made me anticipate your wishes relative to recommendations.

"I had made a collection of the officers belonging to the three Rhode Island regiments, and delivered it in to his Excellency General Washington, to be forwarded to your State. That recommendation and arrangement of officers is the best that I could make or recommend to the General, all circumstances considered. The State will act their pleasure with respect to the appointment. The General only wishes to have good men, such as will discharge their duty in every point of view, and maintain the character of

¹ Journals of Congress, Wednesday, Oct. 9, 1776. ² Bartlett, R. I. Records, Vol. VIII. pp. 30, 31.

gentlemen ; he has no attachment to any person further than his merit recommends him. Men of merit he wishes to be appointed, whether in or out of the army."

Greene's recommendation, when it was made known a few weeks later, "threw the officers," if Lee may be trusted, "into a great flame of discontent. . . . They accused him of partiality to his connections and townsmen, to the prejudice of men of manifestly superior merit."¹ But as his only connections in the army were his brother-in-law, William Littlefield, the captain of his guard, whom he recommended for a lieutenancy, and who, after serving honorably through the war, was retained on the peace establishment long after its close ; and Christopher Greene and Samuel Ward, who had already distinguished themselves by their attention to the instruction and discipline of their men in the camp before Boston, and their fortitude and intrepidity in the expedition against Quebec, and became still more distinguished, in the autumn of the following year, by their gallant defence of Red Bank,—his family attachments had a very narrow field to act in, and were fully justified by the character of their objects. And as this part of the accusation was so utterly unfounded, it is not unreasonable to suppose that there was no better foundation for the other. Lee's letter was written three days after the fall of Fort Washington, when, judging by his own standard, he may have sup-

¹ Lee to Washington, Sparks's Correspondence of the Revolution, Vol. I. p. 306.

posed Washington's confidence in Greene's judgment to have been materially shaken, and, following his own bad instincts, may not have been unwilling to extend the unfavorable opinion to Greene's motives. He had returned from the South, on the 14th of October, with a head dizzy with success, and a heart rankling with jealousy. During the few hours that he had passed at Fort Constitution, on his way to head-quarters, he had found time to write—at Greene's desk, perhaps—a letter to Gates, condemning the position of the army as "execrable"; calling Congress "cattle, that stumble every step"; blaming Washington for not threatening them with resignation for their interference with the army; and calling loudly for a separate army upon the Delaware, or, in other words, an independent command for himself¹. In September, an officer had written from New York, "General Lee is hourly expected, as if from heaven, with a legion of flaming swordsmen." "You ask," writes Tilghman to Duer in October, "if General Lee is in health, and if our people feel bold. I answer both in the affirmative. His appearance among us has not contributed a little to the latter."² Four days after his arrival, the name of Fort Constitution was changed to Fort Lee, in commemoration of his successful defence of Charleston. Lee was not the man, either in heart or in head, to listen to such admiration long

¹ Force, American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. II. pp. 1008, 1034. ² Force, *ut sup.*, pp. 197–1095.

without conceiving unfounded hopes, even if he did not form unwarrantable designs. But, whatever the nature or extent of his wishes may have been, he looked upon this as a favorable moment for aiming a blow at Greene, and seized it with characteristic malevolence.

I am anticipating events by a few weeks ; but, to make an end of this unpleasant part of my narrative, I will add now, that Lee was greatly deceived in his calculations. Washington's confidence, not easily won, was still less easily shaken ; and the Legislature of Rhode Island, accepting his recommendation, appointed the officers whom Greene had selected. Varnum, as he had suggested, was complimented with a renewal of his commission, and, not long after, being appointed to a brigade, left the colonelcy of his battalion vacant, as had been originally intended, for his old Major of the Army of Observation, Christopher Greene.

CHAPTER IX.

Howe in Motion. — Greene to Washington. — Expedition to Staten Island. — Called to Council at Head-quarters. — Letters, and Extracts from Letters. — Foreshadowings of the Quartermaster-General. — Greene's Troops. — The Passage of the Hudson. — Letters to Congress and General Mifflin.

IT seemed very strange then, and seems very foolish now, that Sir William Howe, after taking possession of New York, on the 15th of September, should have waited till the 12th of October before he again put his army in motion. "Our army are now so strongly fortified, and so much out of the command of the shipping, we have little more to fear this campaign," writes Greene. With a well-organized army, this would have been true; but public opinion in England demanded another victory; and Howe, with forces superior in numbers, equipments, and discipline, was determined to win it. Could he get in the rear of the Americans, and cut off their retreat, they would be compelled either to fight at a disadvantage, or lay down their arms. A trial of skill was evidently at hand, and perhaps a trial of strength also. Greene longed for a part in the struggle. "I am informed," he writes on the 12th at five in the afternoon, "a large body of the enemy's troops have landed at Frogg's

Point. If so, I suppose that the troops here will be wanted there. I have three brigades in readiness to reinforce you. General Clinton's brigade will march first, General Nixon's next, and then the troops under command of General Roberdeau. I don't apprehend any danger from this quarter at present. If the force on your side are insufficient, I hope these three brigades may be ordered over, and I with them, and leave General Irvine's brigade to guard the post. If the troops are wanted over your side, or likely to be, in the morning, they should be got over in the latter part of the night, as the shipping may move up from below, and impede, if not totally stop, the troops from passing. I wait your Excellency's further commands. Should be glad to know where the enemy has landed, and their numbers." "The bearer will be put immediately over the ferry," says an indorsement on the envelope, signed "W. Blodget, *Aide-de-camp.*"

Part of the troops were called over, but Greene was not; and, unwilling to remain an inactive spectator of the contest, he undertook to alarm the British General for the safety of his posts on Staten Island. "The tents on Staten Island have been all struck, as far as discovery has been made," he says in a postscript to his letter of the 12th; and, acting upon this, he planned an attack upon the post at Richmond with a detachment of Mercer's men, and was already within a few miles of it by eleven in the evening of the 15th, when orders from Washington reached him, calling him immediately

to Harlem. Mercer held on towards the enemy, and succeeded in surprising a party, and securing twenty prisoners. "Well-disciplined troops," he writes, "would have taken the whole, without the loss of a man."¹

The cause of Greene's sudden summons to headquarters was the council which had been called for the next day — the 16th — at Lee's quarters. This is the council in which it was determined, after "much consideration and debate," and with only one dissenting voice, — Clinton's, — to evacuate York Island, but "retain Fort Washington as long as possible." Greene, as the official minutes show,² was not present at the council, and could not, therefore, have taken that part in the discussion which Gordon attributes to him.³ At what time he reached head-quarters is uncertain; but on the 17th he writes from thence to Governor Cooke, "General Howe has landed at Frogg's Point, a place a few miles east of Hell Gate; he is collecting his force together at that place, with a view to cut off our retreat. His Excellency is making an arrangement to counteract him. The troops appear to be in good spirits; and I am in hopes, if Howe attacks us, he will meet with a defeat. A battle is daily — nay, hourly — expected. I shall come in for no share of the honor or glory of the day if victorious, nor shame or disgrace if defeated,

¹ Force, American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. II. pp. 1073 - 1093. ³ Gordon, American Revolution, Vol. II. p. 338.

² See Minutes, in Force, *ut sup.*, p. 1117.

my command being in New Jersey. Howe's designs, evidently, appear to be to get in our rear to cut off our supplies, and starve the army out. This reduces us to the necessity of extending our left wing out in the country, to preserve our communications with the country from whence we get our support. A few days may produce some events important to the American interest. I was on Staten Island night before last; the greater part of the British troops and the Hessians are drawn off to support General Howe's operations at Frogg's Point."

An incident, trifling in itself, but interesting as illustrative of the times, shows that he was at his own quarters again some time in the course of the 17th. William Bradford, Adjutant of Hitchcock's regiment, had brought off from Long Island "at very great risk," a horse belonging to Jacob Wycoff, an avowed Tory; and which, but for Bradford's energy, would have fallen into the hands of the enemy. What was to be done with the horse, and how was the Adjutant to be rewarded? "As property belonging to Tories is not, nor ought not to be, the reward of those that takes it into possession, only under certain limitations," Greene writes to the New York Convention on the 17th, "I think it my duty to acquaint you that I have the horse in my possession, and shall be delivered to your order, either to the Adjutant, as a reward for his bravery, or to be sold for the benefit of the State, as you may think proper. If

the horse is to be sold, I should be glad of an opportunity to purchase him, as I am in want of a horse, mine being worn out in the service." The Convention requested him to have the horse appraised, and keep him "in your service until some future determination of the Convention, or future Legislature of this State, relative to the disposition of the property of all such persons as have or hereafter may join the enemy that may fall into our hands. The bravery of the Adjutant will then also be considered."¹

When Washington selected Greene for the command which controlled his communications with the seat of government, he evidently felt the necessity of having a man in it whom he could call upon with confidence for other duties besides those of watching the enemy or leading men to battle. New duties — shadows from the Quartermaster-General's department — begin to fall upon his path.

"I was at head-quarters near King's Bridge with his Excellency General Washington last night," he writes the President of Congress on the 20th, from Camp Fort Lee (lately Fort Constitution), "and, on leaving him, was desired to send by express to acquaint you that the army are in great want of a large supply of cartridges, which no person can be spared to make; therefore he requests that you will order all that are now made up at Philadelphia to be sent forward in light wagons that can travel with great despatch, as they are really very much wanted; and, as none can be made up here, that persons be employed

¹ Force, American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. III. p. 251.

at Philadelphia to continue at that business to furnish a full supply for the army.

“ Mr. Commissary Lowry is in great want of a supply of salt, which he begs may be sent to Trenton, to enable him to furnish provisions for the army at King’s Bridge, which are much wanted, and the supplies from Connecticut may shortly be cut off; and I have great reason to apprehend the evil will soon take place, if not wholly, in part. The article of salt is essentially necessary, and must be procured if possible. Fresh provisions cannot be passed over without great difficulty, and the state of health of the troops, from a laxed habit, requires a supply of salt. Mr. Lowry mentions the Council of Safety of Pennsylvania having a quantity.”

Congress responds promptly to the call.

“ Enclosed you have a copy,” he writes to Washington on the 24th, “ of the letter in answer to mine to Congress relative to cartridges. As soon as the cartridges come up, they shall be forwarded. Colonel Biddle has written to Amboy for ninety thousand that are at that post.

“ We have collected all the wagons in our power, and sent over. Our people have had extreme hard duty. The common guards, common fatigue, and the extraordinary guards and extraordinary fatigue, for the removal of the stores and forwarding the provisions, has kept every man on duty.

“ General Putnam requested a party of men to reinforce them at Mount Washington. I sent between two and three hundred of Colonel Durkee’s regiment. Please to inform me whether your Excellency approves thereof.

“ We shall get a sufficient quantity of provisions over to-day for the garrison at Fort Washington. General Mifflin thinks it not advisable to pull the barracks down

yet. He has hopes of our army returning to that ground for winter quarters.¹ I think this would be running too great a risk to leave them standing in expectation of such an event, there being several strong fortifications in and about King's Bridge. If the enemy should throw in a thousand or fifteen hundred men, they could cut off our communication effectually; and, as the state of the barracks are, they would find exceeding good cover for the men. But if we were to take the barracks down, if the boards were not removed, it would in a great measure deprive them of that advantage. However, I have not had it in my power to do either as yet.

"I have directed all the wagons that are on the other side to be employed in picking up the scattered boards about the encampments. I believe, from what I saw yesterday in riding over the ground, they will amount to many thousands. As soon as we have got these together, I purpose to begin upon the barracks. In the mean time should be glad to know if your Excellency has any other orders to give respecting the business.

"I have directed the Commissary and Quartermaster-General of this department to lay in provisions and provender upon the back road to Philadelphia, for twenty thousand men for three months. The principal magazine will be at Aquackanonck. I shall fortify it as soon as possible, and secure that post and the passes to the bridge, which is now repaired, and fit for an army to pass over with the baggage and artillery.

"I rejoice to hear of the defeat of that vile traitor, Major Rogers, and his party of Tories, though I am exceeding

¹ "I found little Mifflin," said Lee to Wilkinson, "exulting in the prospect of fine winter quarters at King's Bridge. I replied to him: 'Winter quarters here, Sir? and the British army still in the field! Go set fire to those you have built, and get away by the light, or Sir William Howe will find quarters for you.'" — Wilkinson's Memoirs, Vol. I. p. 103.

sorry to hear it lost us so brave an officer as Major Greene."

Bear in mind, as you read these details about scattered boards, and find him so attentive to little things, how sorely our army was suffering for want of suitable arms and covering, and see, as you will further on, how the public property was scattered and lost, and you will feel the importance as well as the rarity of this watchfulness. Henceforth his life is filled with such things; one great care with a multitude of lesser cares grouped around it. Observe, too, how carefully he reports every measure to Washington for approval or correction.

His own force on the 26th amounted to two thousand one hundred and forty-six men of all arms, present and fit for duty. Irvine's was the only one of his original brigades that was left him; Roberdeau's having taken the place of Nixon's and Clinton's, and McCallister's and Cloty's regiments that of Bradley's and Dey's. These, too, were days of intense anxiety; and long and frequent were his gazings, from his lookout on the crest of the Palisades, up and down the broad and deep river that flowed at their feet, and on the imperilled works that crowned its eastern bank. As the British army advanced, the "Whig families were seen hurrying unprotected before them, with their clothing and a scanty supply of provisions, to seek shelter for the coming winter, they knew not where."¹ Sights like these were harder to bear than the hor-

¹ Tompkins's Address, in Bolton's "Westchester," Vol. II. p. 373.

rors of the battle-field, for they met the eye when the blood was cool, and the mind free to take note of them in all their painful reality.

Meanwhile his own regular work went steadily on. Soon after the opening of the campaign, efforts had been made to close the passage of the river by means of *chevaux-de-frise* and sunken vessels. "I am fully of opinion," wrote Washington on the 8th of September, "that by the establishing of strong posts at Mount Washington, on the upper part of this island, and on the Jersey side opposite to it, with the assistance of the obstructions already made, and which may be improved in the water, not only the navigation of Hudson's River, but an easier and better communication may be effectually secured between the Northern and Southern States."¹

When these lines were written, several ships had already passed up the river, in spite of the obstructions; and from time to time others continued to pass them, although they had been further strengthened by sinking other vessels. Early in October three frigates went up apparently unharmed, a "gentleman on board one of them walking the second deck, seemingly in command, as if nothing was the matter, and seven forts keeping a constant fire at the ships."² Still, on several occasions, shot had been seen to strike; and great care, it

¹ Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 82; and for a description of the obstructions, Heath, pp. 47, 48. Series, Vol. II. p. 1025; letter of Thomas Erving to the Maryland Committee of Safety.

² Force, American Archives, 5th

was observed, was taken to keep the men, as far as possible, below out of harm's way ; and in August, before Fort Constitution was built, the "Phœnix" and "Rose," in running down, kept close under the western shore, to avoid the well-directed fire from Fort Washington and the works below.¹ It was evident that, if the passage could not be absolutely prevented, it might, at least, be rendered extremely hazardous.

"This being a critical hour," Greene writes to the President of Congress on the 28th of October, "when the hopes and fears of the country and city are continually alarmed, and yesterday there being a considerable heavy cannonade most part of the day, I have thought it advisable to forward an express with the account of the action of the day. The communication between this and the grand division of the army is in great measure cut off; therefore it will be some time before you have any account from his Excellency General Washington.

"A ship moved up the river early in the morning, above our lower lines, right opposite to Fort No. 1, near old head-quarters at Morris's. She began a brisk cannonade upon the shore. Colonel Magaw, who commands at Fort Washington, got down an eighteen-pounder and fired sixty rounds at her ; twenty-six went through her. The gun was mostly loaded with two balls. She was annoyed considerably by two eighteen-pounders from this shore. The confusion and distress that appeared on board the ship exceeds all description. Without doubt she lost a great number of men. She was towed off by four boats sent from the other ships to her assistance ; she slipped her cable, and left her anchor. Had the tide

¹ Heath, p. 54.

run flood one half-hour longer, we should have sunk her. At the same time the fire from the ships began, the enemy brought up their field-pieces, and made a disposition to attack the lines, but Colonel Magaw had so happily disposed and arranged his men as to put them out of conceit of that manœuvre.

“A cannonade and fire with small-arms continued almost all day with very little intermission. We lost one man only. Several of the enemy were killed; two or three our people got and brought off the field, and several more were left there. The firing ceased last evening, and has not been renewed this morning.

“General Washington and General Howe are very near neighbors. Some decisive stroke is hourly expected. God grant it may be a happy one! The troops are in good spirits, and in every engagement since the retreat from New York have given the enemy a drubbing.”

Part of this description had found a place in a letter of the preceding day to General Mifflin, and it is impossible to mistake the cheerful undertone which runs through both letters.

“By Major Howell you will receive one hundred and nineteen thousand musket cartridges. Part arrived to-day and part last night. As soon as the remainder comes up from Amboy and Philadelphia, they shall be sent forward. I have been to view the roads again, and fixed upon Aquackanonck, Springfield, Bound Brook, Princeton, and Trentown, to establish the magazines at Trentown and Aquackanonck to be the principal ones, the others only to serve to support the troops in passing from one to the other. They are all inland posts, and I hope the stores will be secure. I have ordered all the cannon from Amboy, except two eighteen-pounders and two field-

pieces. I have directed them to be sent to Springfield, Bound Brook, and Aquackanonck, to secure the stores.

“ The people have been employed on the other side in getting the boards together at Fort Washington and the ferry. Some have been brought from King’s Bridge. To-day I sent up to Colonel Lasher to know what assistance he could give towards taking down the barracks and bringing off the boards ; and had for answer that he had orders to burn the barracks, quit the post, and join the army by the way of the North River at the White Plains.

“ We have had a considerable skirmish on York Island to-day. The cannonade began in the morning and held until evening, with very short intermissions. A ship moved up opposite Fort No. 1. Colonel Magaw got down an eighteen-pounder, and fired sixty shot at her, twenty-six of which went into her. She slipped her cable and left her anchor, and was towed off by four boats. I think we must have killed a considerable number of their men, as the confusion and distress exceeded all description. Our artillery behaved incomparably well. Colonel Magaw is charmed with their conduct in firing at the ship and in the field. I left the island at three o’clock this afternoon. We had lost but one man ; he was killed by a shell that fell upon his head. We have brought off some of the enemy from the field of battle, and more are still lying on the ground dead.”

And here it may be well to observe that, though Greene was the superior officer on the spot, and evidently, by the tone of his letter, regarded this brisk little affair as a very creditable one, he gives all the credit of it to Magaw. Magaw got down the eighteen-pounder. Magaw made the judicious distribution of the troops. Magaw was “ charmed

with the conduct (of the artillerymen) in firing at the ship and in the field." Had he not mentioned the fact of his leaving the island at three, one would have supposed that he was copying Magaw's report instead of making his own. We shall find him still keeping his own name in the background and putting other names forward, when greater things than this were to be told.

"I am anxious," he continues in the same letter, "to know the state of the troops in the grand army, whether they are high or low spirited, whether well or ill posted, whether a battle is expected or not. We must govern our operations by yours. The troops here and on the other side are in good spirits; but I fear quitting Fort Independence will oblige Magaw to draw his forces into the garrison, as the enemy will have a passage open upon his back. I fear it will damp the spirits of his troops. He did not expect it so soon. If the barracks are not burnt in the morning, and the enemy don't press too hard upon us, we will try to get away some of the boards."

CHAPTER X.

Letters to Washington. — Barracks at Fort Independence burnt. — Letters to Washington. — Letter to Mrs. Greene. — John Clark to General Greene. — The Group at Fort Lee. — Harrison to Greene.

THE tide of war was slowly turning northward, drawing as it rolled on a thick screen of wooded hills between Fort Lee and the main army. “Little skirmishes,” says a letter from Fort Lee, “happen almost every day, but they are thought so little of that they are seldom mentioned as news.”¹ Meanwhile, Greene’s work continues, — incessant watchfulness for the present, careful preparation for the uncertain contingencies of the future.

“Enclosed,” he writes Washington on the 29th, “is an estimate made of the provisions and provender necessary to be laid in at the different posts between this and Philadelphia, to form a communication, and for the support of the troops passing and repassing from the different States.

“Your Excellency will please to examine it and signify your pleasure. Should the estimate be larger than is necessary for the consumption of the army, very little or no loss can arise, as the articles will be laid in at a season when the prices of things are at the lowest rates, and the situations will admit of an easy transportation to market by water.”

¹ Force, American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. II. p. 1239.

See how the New England education crops out in this last sentence. Washington observed it, no doubt; and, taking its place in his cautious mind by the side of many previous and still more subsequent observations, it worked that conviction in him which, a year and a half later, led him to force the Quartermaster-Generalship on Greene's reluctant acceptance.

“The ships,” Greene continues, “have fallen down the North River, and the troops which advanced upon Harlem Plains, and on the hill where the Monday’s action was, have drawn within their lines again.

“I received the prisoners taken, and have forwarded them to Philadelphia. I enclose you a return of the troops at this post, who are chiefly raw and undisciplined.”

Next morning, at three o’clock, as the sentinel looked out from the rampart of Fort Lee, he saw a sudden glare lighting up the wooded heights of Tettard’s and Valentine’s hills, and casting a lurid gleam on the still waters of the Spuyten Devil. The barracks around Fort Independence were all ablaze. Greene hurried across the river to examine the ground and see what could be saved.

“Colonel Lasher burnt the barracks yesterday morning at three o’clock,” he writes Washington on the 29th; “he left all the cannon in the fort. I went out to examine the ground, and found between two and three hundred stand of small-arms (that were out of repair), about two miles beyond King’s Bridge, a great number of spears, shot, shells, &c., too numerous to mention. I

directed all the wagons on the other side to be employed in getting the stores away, and expect to get it completed this morning. I forgot to mention five tons of bar iron that was left. I am sorry the barracks were not left standing a few days longer ; it would have given us an opportunity to have got off some of the boards.

“I think Fort Independence might have kept the enemy at bay several days, but the troops here and on the other side are so much fatigued that it must have been a work of time.

“Colonel Magaw showed me a letter from Colonel Reed, ordering the Rangers to march and join the army. Major Coburn was wounded in the Sunday action. Colonel Magaw says the Rangers are the only security to his lines. By keeping out constant patrols, their acquaintance with the ground enables them to discover the enemy’s motions in every quarter. The Colonel petitions very hard for their stay. I told him I would send an express to learn your Excellency’s further pleasure. The Colonel thinks, if the Rangers leave him, he must draw the garrison in from the lines. That would be a pity, as the redoubts is not yet in any great forwardness. From the Sunday affair, I am more fully convinced that we can prevent any ships from stopping the communication.

“I have forwarded eighty thousand musket cartridges more under the care of a subaltern’s guard, commanded by Lieutenant Pembleton, of Colonel Ralling’s regiment.

“This moment heard of the action of yesterday. Can learn no particulars. God grant you protection and success ! Colonel Crawford says he expects the action to be renewed this morning. I hope to be commanded wherever I can be most useful.”

The enemy were again within sight, but it was difficult to divine their intentions. Greene was

beginning to feel anxious about Fort Washington, which, although the works were under the charge of General Putnam,¹ he felt, from its connection with Fort Lee, in some degree responsible for.

“ The enemy have possession of Fort Independence, on the heights above King’s Bridge,” he writes to Washington on the 31st. “ They made their appearance the night before last; we had got everything of value away. The bridges are cut down. I gave Colonel Magaw orders to stop the road between the mountains.

“ I should be glad to know your Excellency’s mind about holding all the ground from King’s Bridge to the lower lines. If we attempt to hold the ground, the garrison must still be reinforced; but if the garrison is only to draw into Mount Washington, and keep that, the number of troops is too large.

“ We are not able to determine, with any certainty, whether the troops that have taken post above King’s Bridge are the same troops or not that were in and about Harlem several days past. They disappeared from below all at once; and some little time after, about fifty boats, full of men, were seen going up towards Hunt’s Point; and that evening, the enemy were discovered at Fort Independence. We suspect them to be the same troops that were engaged in the Sunday skirmish. Six officers, belonging to privateers that were taken by the enemy, made their escape last night. They inform me that they were taken by the last fleet that came in. They had about six thousand foreign troops on board, one quarter of which had the black scurvy, and died very fast.

“ Seventy sail of transports and ships fell down to Red

¹ Orders of the day, Head-quar- Force, American Archives, 5th Series, ters, Harlem Heights, Oct. 14, 1776, Vol. II. p. 1118.

Hook. They were bound for Rhode Island; had on board about three thousand troops. They also inform that, after the Sunday action, an officer of distinction was brought into the city, badly wounded.

“The ships have come up the river to their station again, a little below their lines. Several deserters from Powley’s Hook have come over. They all report that General Howe is wounded, as did those from the fleet. It appears to be a prevailing opinion in the land and sea service.

“I forwarded your Excellency a return of the troops at this post, and a copy of a plan for establishing magazines. I could wish to know your pleasure as to the magazines as soon as possible.

“I shall reinforce Colonel Magaw with Colonel Ralling’s regiment, until I hear from your Excellency respecting the matter.

“The motions of the grand army will best determine the propriety of endeavoring to hold all the ground from King’s Bridge to the lower lines. I shall be as much on the Island of York as possible, so as not to neglect the duties of my own department. I can learn no satisfactory account of the action of the other day.”

One of the questions of this letter deserves particular attention: “I should be glad to know your Excellency’s mind about holding all the ground from King’s Bridge to the lines.” We shall see by and by what Washington answered. The earnest, watchful soldier paints himself well in these letters, written in the intervals of other duties, and making his daily life, like Washington’s, a ceaseless passing to and fro from the saddle to the desk, and from the desk to the saddle. The thoughts, too, pass

directly from his mind to his paper ; and the events and rumors and conjectures of the day come before us, as they came before him, with the freshness of a present existence about them. But of the individual life — the husband, the friend, the man who loved books and thirsted after knowledge — we get, in these busy days, but two precious glimpses. The first is in a letter of the 2d of November to his wife : —

“ I embrace this opportunity to write you by Bill Hul-burt, who has got dismission from the service on account of his ill state of health. I am now very hearty, and business enough. I am separated from the grand army, and can have no communication without going seventy miles. We had a little action on York Island on Sunday last. We drove the enemy away, and gave one of their ships a severe drubbing. There was an engagement in the grand army, of one brigade. Our loss amounted to about four hundred killed, wounded, and taken prisoners ; the enemy’s unknown, but it is judged near as many again as ours. Our troops are in good spirits, and take a great number of the enemy by scouting parties. I hold all the ground on York Island, in spite of the enemy. Colonel Magaw commands the garrison,—a fine officer. The enemy are at King’s Bridge, and on the ground where you met with the insult from the tavern-keeper. Colonel Bedford lodges with me, and wants you to come and go to Philadelphia ; but, as things are, I can’t advise it. Colonel Biddle, a gentleman from Philadelphia, Quarter-master-General, is continually urging me to send for you to go to the city, and spend some weeks with his lady. Were you here, I should readily agree ; but, as you are at home in peace, I cannot recommend you to come on to

this troublesome part of America. Billy is captain of my guard. I have recommended him to the Assembly for a lieutenancy in the new army. He has got hearty and well again, and is desirous of continuing in the service. Major Blodget is quite fat, and laughs all day. Common Sense (Tom Paine) and Colonel Snarl, or Cornwell, are perpetually wrangling about mathematical problems. Major Livingston is sick, and gone home. I wish you well and happy, and am affectionately yours."

The other we gain by a letter of John Clark, Jr., a spirited young Pennsylvanian, Major in McCallister's battalion, who won so upon Greene's good opinion that he afterwards took him into his family as an aid. He writes from Mr. Lawrence's, at Rockland, on the 8th of November, in a delicate, lady's hand, that contrasts strangely with the military details that fill the first page and a half of his letter:—

"I've ordered," he says in the last half-page, "a fisherman to catch a few pike; hope to have the pleasure of presenting you with a mess very soon. I thank you for your good advice in reminding me of my duty, and hope I won't depart from it, when I send you the fish and the service not injured. Pray tell Major Blodget there is a fine pond to employ his angling in, and that I think an exercise of this kind will be conducive to his health." And in the postscript, "Pray don't forget to send for Beccaria on 'Crimes and Punishments' for me, and furnish me with Sterne's 'Sentimental Journal.' I'll take care of it, and return it safe."

It is impossible not to wish that we knew more about the little circle of which these letters give

us such a tantalizing glimpse. Greene's face had not yet taken that anxious and careworn expression which the Quartermaster-General's department gave it.¹ He was fond of conversation, was a good listener, and particularly skilful in introducing the subjects upon which he wished to draw out the opinions of his company. But duty pressed hard upon him ; and, much as he loved conversation, he loved reading still more. We can easily imagine him seated by his little desk, with his pen or his book, sometimes absorbed in the work in hand, sometimes raising his eye from the printed or the written page to listen for a few moments to the conversation, or throw in a few suggestive words. Paine was not yet Tom Paine the drunkard, or the author of the "Age of Reason," but the great pamphleteer of the Revolution. "The writer of 'Common Sense' and the 'Forrester' is the same person," writes John Adams to his wife. "His name is Paine, a gentleman about two years ago from England,—a man who, General Lee says, has genius in his eyes."² Washington, too, speaks of "the sound doctrine and unanswerable reasonings contained in the pamphlet 'Common Sense,'"³ and of the "powerful change which it was working in the minds of many men" in Virginia.⁴ Clement Biddle was a Philadelphian, two years older than Greene, and, like him, of a Quaker

¹ I was told of this expression of his face by the late Mrs. Sands, whose name will be met with more than once in these pages as Miss Lott.

² Letters of John Adams to his Wife, Vol. I. p. 105.

³ Sparks, Vol. III. p. 276.

⁴ Sparks, Vol. III. p. 347.

family, and a Quaker by education. His reputation for mercantile skill and integrity had procured him an early appointment on the staff, with which he remained connected till 1780, living all the while in close intimacy with Greene, and enjoying the full confidence of Washington. Familiarity with good society and a genial temperament made him as pleasant a companion in camp as his higher qualities of mind and character made him a useful assistant in the serious duties of his difficult and responsible department. John Clark, Jr., must have been a pleasant companion, too. To him Greene was drawn by their common love of knowledge; and it must have been no small source of gratification to the commander to discover in his young subordinate much of the same spirit to which he owed his own advancement in life, and be able by his counsels to repay as it were, through him, some portion of the debt he owed his own early friend and guide,—Dr. Stiles. Samuel Ward, Jr., we already know. He was now a prisoner on parole, fresh from Canada, and able to tell, if he had been less unwilling to speak of himself, thrilling stories of the wild and perilous expedition to Quebec. Hugh Mercer, too, the Scotchman, was often there, the oldest soldier of them all, who could tell of the still wilder scenes amid which he first met Washington,—how he had seen him ride backward and forward over the fatal field of the Monongahela, untouched by the bullets that were striking down some comrade with every fresh

discharge from the deadly rifles of their unseen foe, until, of all the gallant band of officers who had marched out that bright morning in the pride and fulness of their strength, he was the only one who came from the battle unwounded. Mercer could also tell how, spent with exertion and loss of blood, he had hidden himself under the trunk of a fallen tree, over which one of the victorious Indians had passed in pursuit of him; what a refreshing draught he had drunk from a little brook, the first refreshment since the dawn of that disastrous day; and how, in the extremity of his hunger, he had killed and eaten a rattlesnake, and fancied it a delicious morsel. But liveliest, Wittiest, merriest of all the group was young William Blodget, of Providence; first Greene's secretary and then his aid, too amiable not to be loved, too volatile to love himself wisely, but whose laugh always rang out fresh and clear, and who was always ready with his pen to sketch figures and groups, and make his companions laugh by a kind of hieroglyphics of his own, in which part of the words were written out, and part symbolized by figures and objects. But these intervals of social relaxation were few, and seldom free from interruption. An officer would come in for orders, or an orderly perhaps, with a letter fresh from headquarters, in the familiar hand of Washington, or of Harrison, Washington's trusted aid; and Greene, turning to his desk, would be instantly absorbed in his work.

“Colonel Harrison wrote me you were in great want of flour,” he writes to Washington from King’s Ferry on the 5th. “ ‘T is attended with very great difficulty to bring it up from Fort Lee by land. Wagons can’t be got to transport a sufficient supply for your army. At Dobbs’s Ferry there are eight or nine hundred barrels, brought from the other side. I have directed Colonel Tupper to load a number of the pettynaugers and flat-bottomed boats, and send them up to Peekskill. Our troops are so arranged along shore I am in hopes to keep a passage open for this mode of conveyance. If it can be done, it will save an amazing expense.

“I found everything in this place in the utmost confusion; the wagons and flour detained for want of boats and assistance to transport them over. I shall send Captain Pond hither as soon as I get back, to take charge of the public stores here and to transport the things across. Colonel Tupper is to convey the pettynaugers by the ships; and if the barges are manned, the boats are to be run on shore, and Major Clark, who commands a party opposite the ships, is to protect them. I shall attempt to transport stores from Burdett’s Ferry if the enemy make no new disposition. The utmost care shall be taken that nothing falls into the enemy’s hands.

“I am informed by Colonel Harrison that your Excellency approves of the plan for forming the magazines. I have directed the commissaries of the department to lay in the provisions as fast as possible, and the Quartermaster-General is exerting himself to lay in provender.

“Many of our people have got into huts. The tents are sent forward as fast as the people get their huts complete.

“Should this ferry be wanted through the winter, the landing must be altered. I can, by altering the road, shorten the distance two miles; one by land, the other by

water. Where it now is, it freezes very soon ; where I propose it, it is open all winter.

“ I am now in the State of New York, and am informed by Colonel Hawkes Hay that the militia which he commands refuse to do duty. They say that General Howe has promised them peace, liberty, and safety, and that is all they want. What is to be done with them ? This spirit and temper should be checked in its infancy. I purpose to send the Colonel about fifty men, and have directed the Colonel to acquaint them, if they refuse to do duty agreeable to the orders of the State, that I will send up a regiment here, and march them to Fort Lee to do duty there. I beg your Excellency’s further advice.

“ I am informed the Virginia regiments are coming on. I wish I could form a party sufficiently strong to make a little diversion in the rear of the enemy by the way of King’s Bridge. The Hessians have relaid the bridge and been across ; but yesterday morning, I believe, they all went back again. What does your Excellency think of such a manœuvre ? Is it practicable ? has it the appearance of being successful if attempted and well conducted ?

“ We have a flying report that General Gates has defeated Burgoyne. We also hear that a party of Hessians has deserted over to us. I wish to know the truth of both reports.

“ All things were quiet at Fort Lee and York Island yesterday at noon.

“ The people seem to be much alarmed at Philadelphia from the success of the enemy. The country is greatly alarmed at having their grain and hay burnt, yet I believe it will answer a most valuable purpose : I wish it had been sooner agreed upon.

“ I am informed Hugh Gaine, the printer, is gone into New York. I have ordered all the boats stove from Bur-

dett's Ferry to Hobuck, and from Powley's Hook to Bergen Point, to stop the communication. There is a vile generation here as well as with you. The committee from Philadelphia for inquiring into the state of the army complains that enlisting orders are not given out. Please to let me know your pleasure."

While Greene was writing these lines, Harrison, by Washington's order, was answering the question asked in the letter of the 30th October about holding "the grounds between King's Bridge and the lower lines."

"It depends," he says, "upon so many circumstances that it is impossible for him (Washington) to determine the point. He submits entirely to your discretion and such judgment as you will be able to form from the enemy's movements, and the whole complexion of things. He says you know the original design was to garrison the works, and preserve the lower lines as long as they can be kept, that the communication across the river might be open to us, at the same time that the enemy should be prevented from having a passage up and down the river for their ships."¹

¹ Force, American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. III. p. 519.

C H A P T E R X I.

Movements of the Enemy. — Magaw on the Alert. — Greene to Washington. — Harrison to Greene. — Washington to Greene. — Greene to Washington. — Preparations for Defence. — Letters to and from Greene. — Washington at Fort Lee. — Fall of Fort Washington.

EARLY in the morning of that same day, the 5th of November, the enemy “made a sudden and unexpected movement from the several posts they had taken in front of the Americans.”¹ Washington had foiled them by superior generalship. Even Lee was satisfied. “We,” he writes Franklin on the 6th, “have by proper positions brought Mr. Howe to his *ne plus ultra*.”² “The design of this manoeuvre,” writes Washington, “is a matter of much conjecture and speculation, and cannot be accounted for with any degree of certainty.”³ Washington’s conjecture proved the true one. “I expect the enemy will bend their force against Fort Washington, and invest it immediately. From some advices, it is an object that will attract their earliest attention.”⁴

Magaw was on the alert. “We have just now discovered,” he writes to Greene on the 7th, “that

¹ Washington to President of Congress, Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 157. ³ Washington to President of Congress, *ut sup.*

² Force, American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. II. p. 541. ⁴ Washington, *ut sup.*

the enemy have brought down about forty sail to Morrisania Point, ten of which are ships. By this, I imagine they are retreating, and intend to pay us a visit. This forenoon we discovered several English officers on the Plains on this side King's Bridge. We conjecture they had come from the grand army. We have made a bad exchange for Hutchinson's regiment, at least in point of numbers: we have great need of the one hundred and twenty from them. Perhaps you can visit us in the morning. The Hessians continue intrenching on the heights on this side King's Bridge." "Colonel Cadwallader," says the postscript, "has discovered twenty-three topsail vessels."¹

But, farther north, New Jersey seemed their immediate object.

"By an express from Major Clarke, stationed at Dobbs's Ferry," Greene writes to Washington on the 7th, "I find the enemy are encamped right opposite, to the number of between three and five thousand; and the Major adds, from their disposition and search after boats, they design to cross the river. A frigate and two transports or provision-ships passed the *chevaux-de-frise* night before last; they were prodigiously shattered from the fire of our cannon. The same evening, Colonel Tupper attempted passing the ships with the pettynaugers loaded with flour. The enemy manned several barges, two tenders, and a row-galley, and attacked them. Our people ran the pettynaugers ashore, and landed and defended them. The enemy attempted to land several times, but were repulsed. The fire lasted about an hour and a half, and the enemy

¹ Greene Papers, MSS.

moved off. Colonel Tupper still thinks he can transport the provisions in flatboats. A second attempt shall be speedily made. We lost one.

“ General Mercer writes me the Virginia troops are coming on. They are now at Trentown. He proposes an attack on Staten Island; but the motions of the enemy are such I think necessary for them to come forward as fast as possible. On York Island, the enemy have taken possession of the far hill nearest to Spuyten Devil. I think they will not be able to penetrate any farther. There appears to be about fifteen hundred of them. From the enemy’s motions, I should be apt to suspect they were retreating from your army, or altering their operations.

“ Mr. Lovell, who at last is enlarged from his confinement, reports that Colonel Allen, his fellow-prisoner, was informed that transports were getting in readiness, to sail at a moment’s warning, sufficient to transport fifteen thousand men.

“ The officers of Colonel Hand’s regiment are here with enlisting orders. The officers of the Pennsylvania regiments think it a grievance (such of them as are commissioned for the new establishment) that the officers of other regiments should have the privilege of enlisting their men before they get orders. I have stopped it until I learn your Excellency’s pleasure. General Irvine is very much opposed to it. You’ll please to favor me with a line on the subject.”

On the 7th, also, Washington had heard of the passage of other ships through the *chevaux-de-frise*.

“ His Excellency,” writes Harrison on that day, “ just now received intelligence that three of the enemy’s ships passed the *chevaux-de-frise* yesterday, or the day before.

When he considers this event, with the present disposition of the enemy, who have advanced towards the North River, he apprehends that they have something in view that we are not apprised of. He wishes you to post parties of observation at every place on the Jersey side of the North River where they can land, to watch their motions; and upon the least appearance of their collecting boats, or making any disposition to embark, that they will give him the earliest notice.”¹

On the following day Washington himself wrote to Greene:—

“The late passage of three vessels up the North River, of which we have just received advice, is so plain a proof of the inefficacy of all the obstructions we have thrown into it that I cannot but think it will fully justify a change in the disposition that has been made. If we cannot prevent vessels from passing up, and the enemy is possessed of the surrounding country, what valuable purpose can it answer to attempt to hold a post from which the expected benefit cannot be had? I am therefore inclined to think that it will not be prudent to hazard the men and stores at Mount Washington; but, as you are on the spot, I leave it to you to give such orders as to evacuating Mount Washington as you may judge best, and so far revoking the order given to Colonel Magaw to defend it to the last.”²

This letter reached Greene on the 9th, and he immediately answered it.

“Your Excellency’s letter of the 8th this moment came to hand. I shall forward the letter to General Stevens by express. The stores at Dobbs’s Ferry, I had just given orders to the quartermaster to prepare wag-

¹ Greene Papers, Letters to General Greene, 1776. ² Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 164.

ons to remove them. I think the enemy will meet with some difficulty in crossing the river at Dobbs's Ferry. However, it is not best to trust too much to the expected difficulties they may meet there.

“ By the letter that will accompany this, and was to have gone last night by Major Mifflin, your Excellency will see what measures I took before your favor came to hand. The passing of the ships up the river is, to be sure, a full proof of the insufficiency of the obstructions in the river to stop the ships from going up ; but that garrison employs double the men to invest it that we have to occupy it. They must keep troops at King’s Bridge to prevent a communication with the country ; and they dare not leave a very small number, for fear our people should attack them.

“ Upon the whole, I cannot help thinking the garrison is of advantage ; and I cannot conceive the garrison to be in any great danger. The men can be brought off at any time, but the stores may not be so easily removed ; yet I think they can be got off in spite of them, if matters grow desperate. This post is of no importance only in conjunction with Mount Washington. I was over there last evening. The enemy seem to be disposing matters to besiege the place ; but Colonel Magaw thinks it will take them till December expires before they can carry it. If the enemy do not find it an object of importance, they will not trouble themselves about it ; if they do, it is an open proof they feel an injury from our possessing it. Our giving it up will open a free communication with the country by the way of King’s Bridge, that must be a great advantage to them and injury to us.”

In the same letter of the 8th, Washington had written :—

“ The best accounts obtained of the enemy assure us of

a considerable movement among their boats last evening; and, so far as can be collected from the various sources of intelligence, they must design a penetration into Jersey, and to fall down upon your post. You will therefore immediately have all the stores removed which you do not deem necessary for your defence; and, as the enemy have drawn great relief from the forage and provisions which they have found in the country, and which our tenderness spared, you will do well to prevent their receiving any fresh supplies there by destroying them, if the inhabitants will not drive off their stock and remove their hay and grain in time. Experience has shown that a contrary conduct is not of the least advantage to the poor inhabitants, from whom all their effects of every kind are taken, without distinction and without the least satisfaction.

“Troops are filing off from hence as fast as our situation and circumstances will admit, in order to be transported over the river with all expedition.”

“If the enemy crosses the river,” answered Greene, “I shall follow your Excellency’s advice respecting the cattle and forage. Those measures, however cruel in appearance, were ever my maxims of war in defence of a country. In attacking, they would be very improper. . . . I shall collect our whole strength and watch the motions of the enemy, and pursue such measures for the future as circumstances may render necessary.

“As I have your Excellency’s permission, I shall order General Stephen on as far as Aquackanonck, at least. That is an important pass. I am fortifying it as fast as possible.”

Part of the army was now crossing the Hudson at King’s Ferry, and it was evident that the enemy’s plans would soon be known. Washington, too, would soon be at Fort Lee. Meanwhile letters

continued to pass constantly between him and Greene.

“Your Excellency’s favor by Colonel Harrison of the 8th,” Greene writes on the 10th from Fort Lee, “came to hand last evening. I am taking every measure in my power to oppose the enemy’s landing, if they attempt crossing the river into the Jerseys. I have about five hundred men posted at the different passes in the mountains fortifying. About five hundred more are marching from Amboy directly for Dobbs’s Ferry. General Mercer is with me now. I shall send him up to take command of these immediately. I have directed the Quarter-master-General to have everything moved out of the enemy’s way, particularly cattle, carriages, hay and grain. The flour at Dobbs’s Ferry is all moved from that place; and I have directed wagons to transport it to Clarke’s and Orange towns. I was at Dobbs’s Ferry last night; left it at sundown; saw no new movement of the enemy. The enemy landed from on board the ships many bales of goods, supposed to be clothing. I am sure the enemy cannot land at Dobbs’s Ferry, it will be so hedged up by night. The flats run off a great distance; they can’t get near the shore with their ships. If the enemy intends to effect a landing at all, they’ll attempt it at Naiac’s, or Haverstraw Bay. I wish these intelligences may not be calculated to deceive us. Methinks if the enemy intended crossing the river, they would not give us several days to prepare to oppose them. They might have taken their measures, lain concealed until they had got everything in readiness to cross the river, and then effected it at once. It might have been so much easier accomplished that way than it can now, and so many more advantages obtained in getting possession of the grain, hay, cattle, wagons, and horses, that I cannot help

suspecting it to be only a feint to lead our attention astray. I wish it may not turn out so. However, I shall exert myself as much to be in readiness as if they had actually landed, and make the same disposition to oppose them as if I was certain they intended to cross.

“I shall keep a good, intelligent officer at Bergen, and another at Ball’s Ferry, to watch the motions of the ships.

“Your Excellency’s letter to General Putnam this moment came to hand. I have ordered the Quarter-master-General to send off all the superfluous stores, and the commissaries to hold themselves in readiness to provide for the troops at Dobbs’s Ferry and Haverstraw Bay.

“I have wrote to Colonel Hawkes Hay to have the road altered at King’s Ferry. I directed Colonel Tupper to send up to that ferry all the spare boats. I had given orders for collecting and scuttling the boats before your Excellency’s letter came to hand on the subject. Our numbers are small for the duty we have to go through; but I hope our exertions may be in some proportion to your Excellency’s expectation. Sixty or seventy sail of shipping from Frogg’s Point and Morrisania have fallen down the East River to New York.

“In my next I will enclose your Excellency a return of the stores of all kinds at this post, and take your further directions as to the disposition of them.”

On the 11th important intelligence was brought in by Justice Mercerau, of Staten Island. Greene communicated it to Washington the same day, and on the next to the President of Congress.

“Your favor of the 4th and 5th of this instant,” he writes the President, “came duly to hand. You may depend upon my transmitting to Congress every piece of intelligence that comes to hand that is worthy of their notice.

“By one Justice Mercerau, a gentleman that fled from

Staten Island, I am informed that there are ten thousand troops embarked for South Carolina, to be commanded by Lord Dunmore. This intelligence he obtained by a gentleman yesterday from the city of New York, — a man of credit and truth. Mercerau is a very good friend to the cause and a sensible man, and he says from several ways this account is confirmed. Perhaps the number is not so great as reported. Mercerau further informs me that a large fleet are at the watering-place on Long or Staten Island, all ready to sail for England. It is reported the fleet consists of one hundred sail.

“ By several accounts of different people from the city, it appears our prisoners are in a very suffering situation. Humanity requires that something should be done for them. They have only half allowance of bread and water ; but this, I suppose, is exaggerated.

“ The enemy at Dobbs’s Ferry, where they have lain several days past, decamped this morning at nine o’clock, and took the road towards King’s Bridge. They made an appearance at the ferry, as if they intended to cross the river. I believe they are disappointed in their expectations, and at a loss what measures to pursue.

“ We have had several skirmishes with the Hessians on York Island within a few days ; killed and wounded between thirty and forty privates, and one officer.

“ Day before yesterday our people had an interview with the Hessians ; they acknowledged they were greatly imposed upon by their prince, and promised to desert that night, but none came over.

“ A considerable part of the troops on the other side are coming over into the Jerseys, and his Excellency General Washington with them. I expect General Howe will attempt to possess himself of Mount Washington, but very much doubt whether he will succeed in the attempt. Our troops are much fatigued with the amazing duty, but

are generally in good spirits. The Hessians say they are on half allowance. The light-horse are said to be perishing for want of provender."

On the 13th Washington reached Fort Lee.¹ He was now convinced that one of the immediate objects of the enemy was "the investing of Fort Washington";² and it was evident that, if the garrison were to be withdrawn, they must be withdrawn without loss of time. Still his mind wavered in "warfare and hesitation."³ Greene was in favor of defending the fort; and of Greene's "judgment and candor" he had "a good opinion."⁴ While he was thus wavering, the enemy came. On the 15th Magaw was summoned to surrender; and, returning "a spirited refusal,"⁵ sent over an express to Greene with a copy of his letter. Washington had ridden over to Hackinsac. "Enclosed," Greene writes to him from Fort Lee at four o'clock, "you have a letter from Colonel Magaw. The contents will require your Excellency's attention. I have directed Colonel Magaw to defend the place until he hears from me. I have ordered General Heard's brigade to hasten on. I shall go to the Island soon."

Washington hurried back to Fort Lee. Greene and Putnam were gone to Fort Washington. He

¹ Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 134.

Reed, p. 263, and his reprint of the original letters of Washington to

² Ibid.

Reed, p. 124.

³ Letter to Joseph Reed, August 22, 1779; Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 329; and, with slight variations, in W. B. Reed's Life and Correspondence of Joseph

⁴ Washington to Reed, *ut sup.*

⁵ Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 179.

instantly followed, and was partly across the river, when he met them on their way back.¹ It was late. The shadows of evening already lay damp and dark on the deep bed of the river, and were fast enfolding the fortress itself, over which the young flag was waving for the last time in the cold, autumn twilight. While the boatmen of the two barges lay on their oars, Greene and Putnam told him how hopeful they had left Magaw, and how confident all were that they could make their defence good. Encouraged, though not fully sharing their confidence, he returned with them to the western shore,²—all three, perhaps, pausing from time to time, as they climbed the steep ascent of the Palisades, to hearken whether, amid the sounds that floated heavily on the damp night-air, there was anything to encourage them or to alarm. Night slowly wore away,—a long and anxious night, so impenetrably dark on the surface of the river, that, although watchful eyes from either bank were fixed upon it, the enemy passed silently up with thirty flat-bottomed boats, and, entering Spuyten Devil Creek, carried them safely round to Harlem River,³ where Cornwallis and Mathews were waiting their arrival. Day came at last, and with it the booming of cannon from north and south.⁴ At ten, a large body was seen advancing

¹ Marshall, *Life of Washington*, American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. Vol. I. p. 117 (2d ed.); Gordon, III. p. 924; Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 174, Vol. II. p. 348.

note.

² *Ibid.*

⁴ *Graydon, Memoirs*, p. 199.

³ *Howe's official report, Force,*

over Harlem Plain, with their field-pieces in front, which, on coming within cannon-shot of a small work on a rocky point of the ridge that skirted it, they unlimbered, and began to fire.¹

Meanwhile, Washington, Greene, Putnam, Mercer, and Knox, with their aids, had again crossed the river, and were watching the enemy's approach from the old head-quarters at Morris's house. Washington gave no new orders, but, observing the troops and their position, withdrew reluctantly, though just in time to escape capture. Fifteen minutes later the English stood on the very spot where he had been standing.²

The attack began,—Knyphausen leading on the north; Mathews, Cornwallis, and Sterling on the east; Percy, with Lexington still fresh in his memory, on the south.³ Washington had taken his stand on the brow of the Palisades, whence he could see part and hear all.⁴ Greene was with him, and Putnam and Mercer and Knox and Reed. Tom Paine was there, too; and Young Samuel Ward, whose heart misgave him, for, a few days before, on visiting the fort with Greene, he had recognized among its defenders some of the faint-hearted of the Canada expedition, who, when the toil and danger pressed upon them, had turned back, and abandoned their comrades. When they saw Ward, they started as if they had seen a spec-

¹ Graydon, *ut sup.*

Howe's Report, *ut sup.* Washington to

² Graydon, p. 200; Gordon, Vol. II. p. 348.

President of Congress, Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 178.

³ Marshall, Graydon, Gordon, and

⁴ Gordon, Vol. II. p. 351.

tre, and slunk away.¹ There was gallant fighting on the north, where Rawlings, with his Virginians, held the Hessians at bay, giving ground only when their rifles became foul, and could no longer be used with effect. It cost Knyphausen "near upon eight hundred men" to force them back.² Gallantly, too, Cadwallader maintained his ground till the first and second divisions of the enemy, crossing the Harlem and dispersing the troops in their front, were upon the point of cutting off his retreat. The royal troops pushed on with exultation. The Americans fell back, or broke and fled. Rahl was within a hundred yards of the fort. The troops lost heart, and refused to man the lines where, particularly from the northern brow of the hill, they might still have held their ground.³ Magaw did his best, but in they came, panic-stricken, and crowding one upon another, till there was no room left to fight in. The enemy sent a second summons.

Washington saw it; saw the white flag go into the fort; saw his men bayoneted, as they begged for quarters. There was still a chance of safety. Could Magaw but hold out till night, his men might yet be saved from captivity. A gallant Massachusetts man — Captain Gooch — offered to cross with the message; and, making his way up to the fort and then back again, running down the steep hillside, dodging

¹ This was told me by Richard Ray Ward, Esq., of New York, son of Major Ward, who had it from his father. ² This is Gordon's statement. ³ Greene to Governor Cooke, Dec. 4, 1776; Gordon, Vol. II. p. 350.

blows and thrusts from swords and bayonets as he passed, brought back the unwelcome tidings that it was too late;¹ the negotiations had advanced too far; the garrison were already prisoners of war; Fort Washington, with its valuable stores, and more than two thousand men,—good and true men, many of them,—was lost. Why was it held at such hazard?

Greene has always borne the blame of this loss, as if, when the Commander-in-chief was present, the decision had rested with him. The reasons on which he founded his advice he has given in full in his letter of the 9th of November. It cannot be denied that there is great weight in them. Could Fort Washington have held out till the middle of December, it could have held out till spring; and with such a fortress in his rear, Howe would never have dared to enter the Jerseys. Washington found Greene's reasons so strong that he could not come to a decision; and while he was weighing them, the post was lost.

But one of the elements of Greene's calculation failed him. He had calculated upon a vigorous defence, and the defence was not worthy of that of Bunker Hill the year before, nor that of Fort Mercer or Fort Mifflin the year after. Had Rawlings been supported, Knyphausen could not have gained the north lines. But the men refused to man them, and crowded into the redoubt, where they became a compact mark for the enemy's guns.

¹ Heath, p. 86.

The defence on the east was still more irresolute ; and there are questions connected with that on the south which will, it is probable, never be solved.¹ But had it been like that of Rawlings's riflemen, it would have wellnigh crippled the enemy. A thousand or fifteen hundred men more would have been enough to give Magaw the means of supporting the riflemen, and strengthening his defences on the east. I am told, by persons better qualified than I am to decide a military question, that General Greene's advice was founded upon sound military principles. That he still thought so long after, is evident from his answer to Wilkinson. "I afterwards," says Wilkinson, "conversed with General Greene respecting this affair, who was generally blamed for attempting to hold the place ; and I recollect well he observed, 'I would to God we had had ten thousand men there.' He was of opinion that the ground was tenable, and that it was lost by the insufficiency of our force. I am inclined to the same opinion, and the fact may be ascertained."²

This agrees with what Greene wrote to Governor Cooke on the 4th of December. "The garrison consisted of upwards of two thousand men : the lines were too extensive for that number to defend ; and when they retreated into the garrison, so much

¹ According to documents in the possession of Mr. Dawson, Cadwallader gave up the Fort "without a blow, while Magaw was away from

publish the results of his investigation of the whole subject. The student of American history will look anxiously for them.

it, leading his men to oppose another column of the enemy." It is understood that Mr. Dawson will soon

² Wilkinson's Memoirs, Vol. I. p. 103.

confusion, disorder, and dispiritedness prevailed that Colonel Magaw, who commanded the garrison, could not get the troops to man the outworks." These words were written before he had had an opportunity of conversing with any of the prisoners of that disastrous day. In 1778, when he had had that opportunity, and had also studied the subject in the light of longer experience, he wrote to John Brown, "Remember the effect that the loss of the garrison of Fort Washington had: there were men enough to have defended themselves against all the army, had they not been struck with a panic; but, being most of them irregular troops, they lost all their confidence when the danger began to grow pressing, and so fell a prey to their own fears."¹

¹ The following passage from the same letter, written 11th September, 1778, after the failure of the expedition against Newport, shows on what his reasoning concerning the defence of the lines was founded. "Remember the loss of the British army before Ticonderoga last war, in attempting to storm lines considerably when compared to the fortifications at Newport, and defended with a less number of men in the works than were here. Recollect the fate of the British army at Bunker's Hill, attacking slight works defended by new-levied troops."

C H A P T E R X I I .

Fall of Fort Lee. — Different Accounts of it. — Retreat through the Jerseys. — Greene's Hopes. — Letters. — Inefficiency of Congress. — Embarrassments of Washington's Position. — Ampler Powers conferred on Washington. — Greene to Governor Cooke.

“**T**HE loss of Fort Washington rendered Fort Lee useless ; his Excellency ordered its evacuation accordingly. All the valuable stores accordingly were sent off. The enemy got intelligence of it ; and, as they were in possession of Harlem river, brought their boats through that pass without our notice. They crossed the river in a very rainy night, and landed, about five miles above the fort, about six thousand, — most accounts say eight thousand. We had then at Fort Lee only between two and three thousand effective men. His Excellency ordered a retreat immediately. We lost considerable baggage, for want of wagons, and a considerable quantity of stores. We had about ninety or a hundred prisoners taken, but these were a set of rascals that skulked out of the way for fear of fighting. The troops at Fort Lee were mostly of the flying camp, irregular and undisciplined ; had they obeyed orders, not a man would have been taken.

“I returned to the camp two hours after the troops marched off. Colonel Cornwell and myself got off several hundred ; yet, notwithstanding all our endeavors, still near a hundred remained hid about the woods. We retreated to Hackensack, from Hackensack to Equacanach, from Equacanach to Newark, from Newark to Brunswick,

from Brunswick to this place [Trenton] ; here we are, endeavoring to collect a sufficient force to give the enemy battle, or at least to stop their progress."

Such is Greene's summary to Governor Cooke of the busy, anxious fortnight which followed the fall of Fort Washington. A careful comparison with other authorities shows that, though perfectly accurate in every other respect, he has failed to do justice to his own share in these interesting transactions. The day after the surrender, Washington had returned to Hackensack, where the troops he had taken over the river with him were posted.

"The much greater part of the enemy," Greene wrote him on the 18th, "marched off from Fort Washington, and above King's Bridge, this morning. Their route appeared to be towards New York. One of the train of artillery came across the river last night on a raft. By this account, the enemy must have suffered greatly on the north side of Fort Washington. Colonel Rawlings's regiment was posted there, and behaved with great spirit. Colonel Magaw could not get the men to man the lines ; otherwise, he would not have given up the fort.

"I am sending off the stores as fast as I can get wagons. I have sent three expresses to Newark for boats, but can get no return of what boats we may expect from that place. The stores here are large, and the transportation by land will be almost endless. The powder and fixed ammunition I have sent off first by land, as it is an article too valuable to trust upon the water.

"Our Bergen guard were alarmed last night, but believe without reason."

The night of the 19th was dark and rainy; and the guards that had been stationed along the Palisades to observe the movements of the enemy kept such slack watch that he made good his landing at Closter, five miles above Fort Lee, before they gave the alarm. "Then an officer," says Paine, who was at the Fort as Greene's volunteer aid, "posted down to Fort Lee, with the tidings."¹ Greene instantly despatched an express to Washington, at Hackensack; and, ordering the garrison under arms, put them in motion for the head of the English Neighborhood,—a small stream which, with the Hackensack (neither of them fordable near the fort), formed the western boundary of the narrow neck of land on which the fort stood. There was no time for hesitation; for Cornwallis, the most active of the English generals,—Greene's future antagonist in the Carolinas,—had but a mile and a half to march to cut off the retreat of the Americans, and Greene five to secure it. Hurrying his men over the ground, he succeeded in reaching the head of the creek before the enemy came up, and thus securing the road to the bridge over the Hackensack. Here he drew up his little army, with their front towards the enemy; and, while Washington, who had now joined him, held them at bay, hastened back to the fort, collected a large body of stragglers,—nearly three hundred in all,—and conveyed them in safety across the river.

¹ Crisis, No. I. Force, American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. III. p. 1291.

Such was Greene's first measuring of swords with Cornwallis.¹

The remainder of the retreat to the banks of the Delaware—"the mud rounds," as the soldiers called it—was conducted by Washington in person, with Greene most of the time at his side, and deeper than ever in his counsels. This was the darkest hour of the war. "It is impossible for me," wrote Washington to his brother, John Augustine, on the 19th of November, "in the compass of a letter, to give you any idea of our situation; of my difficulties, and of the constant perplexities and mortifications I meet with, derived from the unhappy policy of short enlistments, and delaying them too long."² A month passed, and he writes again to the same brother, "In a word, my dear sir, if every nerve is not strained to recruit the new army with all possible expedition, I think the game is pretty nearly up."³ The tone of Greene's letters is more hopeful. The stern excitement of the close-drawn contest seems to have given an elastic energy to his feelings, without clouding his judgment. He sees whence the evil comes, and where the danger lies, but finds grounds of hope even in the very clearness of his perceptions.

¹ In this account I have followed Gordon, who differs from the author of "The Crisis" (Tom Paine). Gordon was very minute in his inquiries, and General Greene marked out for him, at his written request, the po-

sitions of the army in the various movements round New York, etc. during this campaign.—Greene Papers, letters of Gordon and Greene.

² Sparks, Vol. IV. p 184.

³ Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 231.

" We have had," he writes to Governor Cooke on the 4th of December, " another convincing proof of the folly of short enlistments: the time for which the five months' men were engaged expired at this actual period " (during the retreat, that is, from Hackensack). " Two brigades left us at Brunswick, notwithstanding the enemy were within two hours' march and coming on. The loss of these troops at this critical time reduced his Excellency to the necessity to order a retreat again. Here [Trenton] we are endeavoring to draw our forces together. The Philadelphia and Pennsylvania militia turn out with great spirit, but the Jersey militia behaves scurvily, and I fear are not deserving the freedom we are contending for. General Lee is on his march for this place, and part of the Ticonderoga troops. When we get collected together, I am in hopes it will be a respectable body of troops.

" The enemy spread desolation wherever they go; the British and Hessian troops plunder, without distinction, Whig and Tory; all fare alike.

" I am in hopes the General will give orders to advance upon the enemy to-morrow: our numbers are still small, not to exceed 5,000, but daily increasing. When we left Brunswick we had not 3,000 men,—a very pitiful army to trust the liberties of America upon. The American States should establish their militia upon the British plan: they would be a much better body of troops; it would do less injury to husbandry, manufactures, and commerce than upon the present establishment. The distresses of the people would be infinitely less, for those to whose lot it fell to serve would naturally accommodate their business to their situation. A militia upon the British establishment are a respectable body of troops, and afford a great internal security to a state. They are subject to such a degree of discipline and order as renders

them formidable ; and, without that, numbers are useless, nay, distressing, for you cannot bring them to act to any one point, and you have a great many useless and unprofitable mouths to feed. . . . I wish the enlisting may go on favorably, but I fear the contrary : the success of privateering has set all the troops distracted. 'T is impossible to oppose the enemy successfully without a good, firm body of troops, subject to proper discipline and well officered. Our men are good ; nothing is wanting but officers and discipline to make the American troops equal to any in the world.

“The situation this army was in when I wrote you last,” he writes to his wife on the same day, “must naturally alarm your fears. The enemy have since pressed us very hard from place to place. The time for which our troops were engaged expired, and they went off by whole brigades, notwithstanding the enemy lay within two or three hours' march of us, and our force remaining not near half equal to theirs. The virtue of the Americans is put to a trial : if they turn out with spirit, all will go on well ; but if the militia refuses their aid, the people must submit to the servitude they deserve. But I think it is impossible that Americans can behave so poltroonish. The militia of Pennsylvania, and particularly of Philadelphia, are coming in by thousands. In a day or two I hope to advance upon the enemy, and drive them back as fast as they drove us in. We are making every disposition to advance upon the enemy, and by to-morrow I hope the General will issue his orders to move forward.

“The troops of Maryland and Virginia have orders to move forward to stop the ravages of the enemy. Their footsteps are marked with destruction wherever they go. There is no difference made between the Whigs and Tories ; all fare alike. They take the clothes off on the people's

back. The distress they spread wherever they go exceeds all description.

“I hope to God you have not set forward for this place from what I wrote you last. Continue at home, my dear, if you wish to enjoy the least share of happiness. Seventy sail of the enemy’s fleet sailed a few days past, their destination unknown: but ‘t is suggested by many they were bound for Rhode Island; but I rather suppose them to be going to the southward. The climate will favor their operations much more than the Northern States.

“What is the news amongst you? The loss of Fort Washington and the enemy’s late movements weighed down the spirits of the people. Tell Dr. Senter to write me how recruiting goes on, and the temper of the people, the success of the privateers, and everything of an interesting nature.

“I am hearty and well amidst all the fatigues and hardships I endure. I hope you enjoy your health and the company of all your friends about you. Be of good courage; don’t be distressed: all things will turn out for the best. I wish you abundant happiness, and am affectionately yours.”

It is evident that these letters were written in great haste and amid frequent interruptions,—haste and interruptions which show what a life he was leading. It was evident, too, that, while he was not afraid to look the danger full in the face, he was resolved to make the most of every favorable circumstance, and paint things in as bright colors as he could without awakening unfounded expectations.

On the 7th, three days after this last letter to his wife, we find him at Princeton, writing to Washington at Trenton:—

“ Lord Stirling will write by the same express that this comes by, and enclose your Excellency several pieces of intelligence obtained of different people yesterday. His Lordship thinks the enemy are making a disposition to advance: for my part, I am at a loss to determine whether their disposition is to advance, or for defence. The enemy have got a party advanced about seven miles this side Brunswick; another at Brunswick, with an advance of guard two miles this side of the town. ’Tis reported by some of the country people that the enemy intend to advance in two columns; one this, the other the Boundbrook road. General Mercer advanced upon this road, and I should think the German battalion might be advantageously posted on the other road.

“ Major Clarke reports General Lee is at the heels of the enemy. I should think he had better keep upon the flanks than upon the rear of the enemy, unless it were possible to concert an attack at the same instant of time in front and rear.

“ Our retreat should not be neglected, for fear of consequences. The bottom of the river should be examined, and see if the boats can be anchored in the ferry-way. If there is no anchor-ground, the bridge must be thrown over below. Colonel Biddle had better make a trial immediately, that we may not be in confusion. If a bridge cannot be thrown over, forty boats should be manned under the care of a good officer, and held in readiness: with these boats, prudently managed, the troops could be thrown over in a very short time. Methinks all the cannon that don’t come forward with the army might be well posted on the other side the river to cover a retreat.

“ I think General Lee must be confined within the limits of some general plan, or else his operations will be

independent of yours. His own troops, General St. Clair's, and the militia must form a respectable body.

“If General Dickinson would engage the militia for some given time, there might be some dependence upon them; but no operation can be safely planned wherein they are to act a part, unless they can be bound by some further tie than the common obligation of a militiaman. I think if the General was at length to engage his militia on some such plan, your Excellency might take your measures accordingly.

“This moment a captain has returned that went to reconnoitre last night, and it is beyond a doubt the enemy are advancing; and my Lord Stirling thinks they will be up here by twelve o'clock. I shall make the best disposition I can to oppose them.”

The hope of making a stand was not realized; and again the little army turned its face towards the Delaware, its ranks growing thinner at every step.

“The last time I wrote you was at Trenton,” he writes to his wife on the 16th from Coryell’s Ferry, on the Delaware, forty miles above Philadelphia; “since which, the enemy have reduced us to the necessity to pass the Delaware. We have been endeavoring to draw a force together to check General Howe’s progress; but the militia of New Jersey have been so frightened, and the Pennsylvania militia so disaffected, that our endeavors have been ineffectual. The troops under the command of General Lee we expect to join us to-day, but without the General, who had the misfortune to be made a prisoner on Friday last by a party of light-horse. The General, by some strange infatuation, was led from the army four miles; the Tories gave information of his situation, and a party

of light-horse came eighteen miles, and seized and carried him off. This is a great loss to the American States, as he is a most consummate General. Fortune seems to frown upon the cause of freedom ; a combination of evils are pressing in upon us on all sides. However, I hope this is the dark part of the night, which generally is just before day. The Tories are the cursedest rascals amongst us, — the most wicked, villainous, and oppressive. They lead the relentless foreigners to the houses of their neighbors, and strip the poor women and children of everything they have to eat or wear ; and after plundering them in this sort, the brutes often ravish the mothers and daughters, and compel the fathers and sons to behold their brutality ; many have fallen sacrifices in this way.

“ The Tories have done us more injury than they can repair during their generation. Beware of those miscreants ; watch them narrowly.

“ I hear a fleet and army have made good their landing at Rhode Island. God forbid they should penetrate into the country with you as with us. But if the New England virtue is not greater than it is here, God knows what the consequence will be. The militia of the city of Philadelphia are the only people that have shown a disposition to support the cause.

“ The enemy are now retreating into winter quarters, as they say ; but perhaps 'tis only a feint to amuse, to try to surprise us. We must be on our guard, which I hope we shall.

“ The Eastern delegates applied to his Excellency General Washington to permit me to go to New England to take the command there ; but the General would not permit me to go. I am impatient to hear how matters stand with you, — what opposition is forming, and how the recruiting service goes on.

“ We have pleasing accounts from Virginia and Mary-

land with respect to the recruiting service ; the regiments are filling very fast. We are fortifying the city of Philadelphia, and doubt not we shall be able to keep the enemy out this winter. The city is under martial law ; the Quakers horridly frightened for fear the city should be burnt. The ravages of the Jerseys is shocking to behold.

“ I have no hope of coming to New England this winter. I enjoy my health perfectly well. I feel a great deal of anxiety for your sake. God bless you with health, and comfort you during our separation. Anything you want my brethren will furnish you ; don’t be afraid to apply. I should be happy to receive a line, if it can come by a safe hand ; but if you cannot write by some safe hand, don’t write at all, for it’s uncertain whose hands it may fall into. Remember my love to my brethren, and to all inquiring friends.

“ The Continental currency the Tories are endeavoring to destroy : the credit is almost lost in the Jerseys, and much injured in this State. However, a good army will soon repair the credit, and nothing else. Much depends upon New England this winter.

“ I must bid you adieu, being called in haste. Farewell, my dear. Kiss our little pledges of mutual affection, whom I long to see.”

The reader will hardly have forgotten Greene’s letter from Fort Lee about the “ general and regimental hospitals.” It is pleasant to find that, even in the midst of this general depression, he never loses sight of the great questions of organization :—

“ I take the liberty to recommend Doctor Warren to Congress,” he writes to the President on the 16th, “ as a

very suitable person to receive an appointment of a sub-director, which I am informed they are about to create a number of. Dr. Warren has given great satisfaction where he has had the direction of business. He is a young gentleman of ability, humanity, and great application to business.

“ I feel a degree of happiness that the Congress are going to put the hospital department upon a better establishment; for the sick this campaign have suffered beyond description, and shocking to humanity. For my own part, I have never felt any distress equal to what the sufferings of the sick have occasioned, and am confident that nothing will injure the recruiting service so much as the dissatisfaction arising upon that head.”

But a still more important question was now forcing itself upon his attention; a question which, in those critical moments, must have been the subject of frequent and earnest discussion between him and Washington. Among the mistakes and evils which this eventful year had revealed, there was none graver or more evident than the inability of Congress to cope with the new and urgent executive questions which every day brought forth.

The most serious embarrassments against which Washington had to contend arose from the necessity of constantly referring to Congress for authority, and asking their advice where he ought to have controlled their resolves. Upon all the important questions that had arisen in that body, there had, from the beginning, been serious differences of opinion; sectional jealousies and personal jealousies mingling largely in every discus-

sion, and preparing the way for those dangerous intrigues which, in the course of the following year, attained their full measure of malignity in the Conway cabal. The voices of a few wise men were drowned in the clamor of a majority jealous of military power, and unable to use their own power effectively. It was Congress that held on to the fatal system of short enlistments, until the time for securing an army for the war was passed. It was Congress that wasted precious days in debate, when circumstances called for prompt and decisive action. Nor was the personal conduct of individual members in perfect harmony with their professions. At this very time, when the fate of the war was trembling in the balance, and every man should have been at his post, John Adams, although a member of the board of war, was indulging himself in a three months' visit to his family in Massachusetts.¹ It was evident to the men upon whom the heat and burden of the day fell, that the scattered powers of Congress must, for a time at least, be concentrated in a single hand, and Washington authorized to do whatever the occasion required, without waiting to consult a distant and dilatory assembly. In this delicate and embarrassing situation, Washington seems to have placed his chief reliance upon Greene; and sorely must Greene have felt the loss of Samuel

¹ Life and Works of John Adams, it was a great error of judgment in Vol. I. p. 257. No one can call Mr. him to absent himself from Congress Adams's patriotism in question; but at this critical moment.

Ward, through whom he might have brought the subject before Congress without exposing either Washington or himself to the suspicion of seeking to augment the military power at the expense of the civil power. But there was no time for hesitation. Washington wrote on the 20th, with his usual frankness and good sense, Greene on the 21st:—

“ Although I am far from thinking the American cause desperate, yet I conceive it to be in a critical situation. The enemy in the heart of the country ; the disaffected daily increasing ; the Continental money losing its currency ; the time for which the troops stand engaged almost ready to expire ; very few enlisted upon the new establishment ; the tide of public sentiment at a stand, and ready to run through different channels ; the people refusing to supply the army under various pretences, but evidently from a disaffection to the cause and to the currency,— are combined evils calculated to pave the way for General Howe’s advances ; who, having cantoned his troops advantageously, stands prepared to take advantage of those circumstances which, I am sorry to say, afford him but too favorable a prospect. It is necessary, in addition to this disagreeable train of evils, that the different corps of officers who are discontented and unsatisfied, either from a real or supposed injury in their appointments from the different States, should be reconciled ; that recruiting may go on with spirit ; that there should be an augmentation of our force, and a larger train of artillery.

“ Effectually to remedy those evils and oppose the enemy ; to put the recruiting service in a favorable train ; to establish the artillery and elaboratory upon a proper

footing ; to check the disaffected and call out assistance ; to give a currency to the Continental money, and form the necessary magazines,— greater powers must be lodged in the hands of the General than he has ever yet exercised. It is impossible, in his present situation and the short time he has to prepare for the ensuing campaign, for him to be in readiness so early as General Howe will take the field, unless you delegate to him full power to take such measures as he may find necessary to promote the establishment of the new army. Time will not admit nor circumstances allow of a reference to Congress.

“ I can see no evil nor danger to the States in delegating such powers to the General, reserving to yourselves the right of confirming or repealing the measures. The General should have power to appoint officers to enlist at large. This is no time to be particular about proportions or attentive to economy. The measure of our force should be the extent of our funds.

“ We have a formidable enemy to oppose, whose progress can only be checked by a superior force ; and however disagreeable the reflections, this is a serious truth, that the present existence of the civil depends upon the military power. I am no advocate for the extension of military power ; neither would I advise it at present, but from the fullest conviction of its being absolutely necessary. Remember the policy of the Romans, a people as tenacious of their liberties as any on earth. When their state was invaded, they delegated full powers to exert their whole forces. The state of war is so uncertain, dependent upon so many contingencies ; a day, nay, an hour, is so important in the crisis of public affairs,— that it would be folly to wait for relief from the deliberative councils of legislative bodies. The virtue of the people, at such an hour, is not to be trusted ; and I can assure you that the General will not exceed his powers, though he may sacri-

fice the cause. There never was a man that might be more safely trusted, nor a time when there was a louder call. If you intend to support your independence, you must not be too delicate in the choice of means.

“Examples are daily made by General Howe of our friends who fall in his way, while those who are disaffected to our cause are suffered to remain in peace and quiet amongst us. Many who are now well affected will be induced, from the risk and danger on the one side, and the apparent security on the other, to change their sentiments. A discretionary power to punish the disaffected is necessary. The militia have refused to turn out when there has been the greatest want of their assistance, and nothing but such a power can ever compel them. If the refusal of the Continental money, and the withholding of the necessary supplies from the army, for want of such a power in the General, are to pass unpunished, the one will put it out of our power to pay, and the other to support the troops, and consequently must lay the foundations of all oppositions.”

Both letters were laid before Congress on the 26th. A step in the direction which they suggested had already been taken by a resolution of the 12th, the day of the adjournment to Baltimore, declaring “that, until the Congress shall otherwise order, the General be possessed of full power to order and direct all things relative to the department, and to the operations of war.”¹ After hearing Washington and Greene’s letters, the subject of ampler powers was discussed in committee of the whole, and decided affirmatively on the 27th,

¹ Journals of Congress, December 12, 1776.

the second day of the discussion, though by what majority the meagre journals do not tell.

“ This Congress, having maturely considered the present crisis, and having perfect reliance on the wisdom, vigor, and uprightness of General Washington, do hereby

Resolve, That General Washington shall be, and he is hereby, vested with full, ample, and complete powers to raise and collect together, in the most speedy and effectual manner, from any or all of these United States, sixteen battalions of infantry, in addition to those already voted by Congress ; to appoint officers for the said battalions of infantry ; to raise, officer, and equip three thousand light-horse, three regiments of artillery, and a corps of engineers, and to establish their pay ; to apply to any of the States for such aid of the militia as he shall judge necessary ; to form such magazines of provisions, and in such places, as he shall think proper ; to displace and appoint all officers under the rank of brigadier-general ; and to fill up all vacancies in every other department in the American army ; to take, wherever he may be, what ever he may want for the use of the army, if the inhabitants will not sell it, allowing a reasonable price for the same ; to arrest and confine the persons who refuse to take the Continental currency, or are otherwise disaffected to the American cause, and return to the States of which they are citizens their names and the nature of their offences, together with the witness to prove them.

“ That the foregoing powers be vested in General Washington, for and during the term of six months from the date hereof, unless sooner determined by Congress.”¹

Great must Greene’s satisfaction have been

¹ Journals of Congress, December 27, 1776.

when he read these resolutions ; and it is impossible not to regret that when he and Washington met, there was no one by to tell us how cordially they grasped each other's hand, and with what a clearing up of the brow they sat down to look over the new field together.¹ Of Greene's feelings some idea may be formed from a letter to Governor Cooke, which he wrote with a pen still fresh from the memorable letter to the President of Congress.

“ By your letter to General Washington, I find the British troops have landed on Rhode Island. Although I am sorry my own country should be subject to their ravages, yet I rejoice that they are surrounded by a people who are united and firmly determined in opposition. You may be subject to a partial evil, but America cannot fail to reap the advantage. You think you are greatly infested with the Tories and disaffected, but there is but the shadow of disaffection with you to what there is here. The Friends, or Quakers, are almost to a man disaffected. Many have the effrontery to refuse the Continental currency. This line of conduct cannot fail of drawing down the resentment of the people upon them. The fright and disaffection was so great in the Jerseys, that, in our retreat of one hundred and odd miles, we were never joined by more than a hundred men. I dare say, had that army been in New England, we should not have been under the necessity of retreating twenty miles. We are now on the west side of the Delaware ; our force, though small, collected together. But, small as it is, I hope to give the enemy a stroke in a few days.

¹ How the army viewed this *Dictatorship* may be seen in Thacher's Military Journal, p. 74.

Should fortune favor the attack, perhaps it may put a stop to General Howe's progress. His ravages in the Jerseys exceeds all description,—men slaughtered, women ravished, and houses plundered, little girls not ten years old ravished, mothers and daughters ravished in the presence of the husbands and sons who were obliged to be spectators to their brutal conduct.

“ I think, notwithstanding the general disaffection of a certain order of people, the army will fill up. Should that be the case, nothing is to be feared.

“ By a vessel just arrived from France with a valuable cargo, we learn a French war is inevitable.

“ Short enlistments has been in a great measure the source of all the misfortunes that we labor under, though, thank God! but few to what we at first expected. The Congress, in the infancy of politics, could not be brought to believe many serious truths. By attending to speculative principles, rather than real life, their maxims in war have been founded in folly. However, experience ripens judgment, and enables to correct many an error in business that, at first, we could not conceive of; and I don't doubt the Congress, in time, will be as able politicians in military matters as they are in civil government.

“ The Eastern delegates made application to General Washington for me to come to Rhode Island. But the General would not consent. He thinks more is to be trusted to the virtue of your people than to the force of this country. As the enemy have got possession of Rhode Island, and done all the mischief they can, it will not be bad policy to let them remain in quiet until spring. To attempt any (thing) against them, unless you are sure of success, will be a very dangerous manœuvre. 'T is an endless task to attempt to cover all the country. You must drive back the stock from the shores, and make a disposition to cover capital objects; by too great a division

of your force, you'll be incapable of making any considerable opposition whenever they may think proper to make a descent. But it is my opinion they will be peaceable if you will ; for, from the best accounts we can get, they consist of the invalids of the army. They may attempt to plunder the shores, but nothing more than that, this winter ; for I am confident they have no hopes of penetrating into the country. If they make any descent, it will be against Providence, to seize the stores and burn the town. This is very probable, as the Tories will endeavor in Newport to spirit them on to such an attempt ; but, unless it is already done, you have nothing to fear.

“ I am told some malicious reports propagated industriously about me, respecting the loss of the baggage and stores at Fort Lee. They are as malicious as they are untrue. I can bring very good vouchers for my conduct in every instance, and have the satisfaction to have it approved by the General under whom I serve. Everything was got off from that place that could be, with the roads and wagons we had to move the stores with. The evacuation of Fort Lee was determined upon several days before the enemy landed above us, and happily all the most valuable stores were away. The enemy's publication of the garrison and stores there taken is a grand falsehood.* Not an article of military stores was left there, or nothing worth mentioning.

“ The Congress have removed to Baltimore. General Spencer and General Arnold are coming to take the command at Rhode Island. Arnold is a fine, spirited fellow, and an active general.

“ I hope they 'll keep the enemy at bay.”

CHAPTER XIII.

Washington's Confidence in Greene excites Jealousy. — Charles Lee. — Greene's Share in the Jersey Campaign. — Surprise of Trenton. — Letters. — Greene in Favor of following up the Surprise. — The Assanpink. — Princeton. — March to Morristown.

IT was hardly possible to stand so high as Greene was known to stand in the confidence of the Commander-in-chief, without exciting some feelings of envy. How bitter these feelings became in the sequel we shall see when Conway's Cabal comes to light. Meanwhile, in this as in other evil things, Charles Lee took the lead; beginning by an artful misuse of the alleged discontent occasioned by some of Greene's recommendations for commissions in the Rhode Island line, in the hope of shaking Washington's confidence in his disinterestedness, and closing by an artful appeal to Washington's self-esteem, in order to shake his confidence in his judgment: "O General! why would you be overpersuaded by men of inferior judgment to your own?"¹ Reed, too, who appears at this time to have looked up to Lee with a confidence which he lived to regret, uses nearly the same words in a letter of the 22d of December: "Allow me to

¹ Lee to Washington, November of the Revolution, Vol. I. p. 306. 18, 1776, Sparks's Correspondence See also *sup.*, p. 231.

hope that you will consult your own good judgment and spirit, and not let the goodness of your heart subject you to the influence of opinions from men in every respect your inferiors.”¹ How far Lee was sincere in his opinion it would be useless to inquire; but we cannot forget that at this very time he was writing to Gates, that “a certain great man was damnably deficient.”² But of the sincerity which led to Reed’s suggestion there is no reason to doubt. A more intimate acquaintance with Greene soon led him to change his opinion, and made him, in the end, one of his most trusted friends and warmest admirers.

It is evident, from Greene’s letter to Governor Cooke, that Washington was unwilling to separate himself from so trusty a counsellor at so trying a moment. But, honorable as this circumstance was to his character, and gratifying as it must have been to his feelings, it was most unfortunate in its bearing upon his place in history. In a separate command, his opinion and advice would have been given in writing, and we should have been able to ascertain with precision the plans that he proposed and the measures that he suggested. How freely he would have written, we see by his letter of the 7th of December, from Princeton;³ and it is but fair to suppose that in that daily personal intercourse with the Commander-in-chief, which con-

¹ Life and Correspondence of President Reed, Vol. I. p. 272. ² Letter from Basking Ridge, December 13, 1776: “*Entre nous*, a cer-

tain great man is most damnably deficient.” — Wilkinson, Memoirs, Vol. I. p. 108.

³ *Sup.*, p. 282.

tinued unbroken through the whole of this winter campaign, he spoke as fully and as freely as he wrote. We know, indeed, by Hamilton's express testimony, that he had a share in the "formation," as well as "in the execution, of the plans" which changed so suddenly the whole aspect of the war.¹ But this is all that we know; and, without venturing to claim for him the original suggestion of the brilliant attack upon Trenton, or the still more brilliant advance upon Princeton, we must be satisfied with the uncontested fact that he took a prominent part in the execution of both.

It was never Washington's intention to permit the enemy to keep undisturbed possession of the Jerseys; but where and when to strike the first blow was a question of no little difficulty. When Greene wrote to Governor Cooke, "I hope we shall give the enemy a stroke in a few days," he evidently says what he and Washington had already said to each other. Nor is it probable that either of them waited for Reed's letter of the 22d, in order to perceive the advantage of an attack upon Trenton:—²

"If your business at Newtown will permit," Greene writes to Colonel Biddle on the 24th, "I should be glad to see you here. There is some business of importance to communicate to you, which I wish to do to-day. No butter, no cheese, no cider,—this is not for the honor of Pennsylvania. Colonel Griffin is at Mount Holly, col-

¹ Hamilton's Eulogium on Greene, delivered before the Cincinnati. Works, Vol. II. p. 480. ² See Reed's Life and Correspondence, Vol. I. p. 271.

lecting great numbers of the Jersey troops ; they have drove the Hessians and Highlanders many miles. Yesterday a great firing was heard there ; the consequence I have not learned."

The business of importance was evidently the attack upon the Hessians at Trenton, now fully matured, and although carefully kept secret, yet a secret which Biddle's duties required him to know. In the attack, Greene commanded the left wing and Sullivan the right. Washington, Stirling, and Mercer were with Greene, St. Clair with Sullivan. Greene's column, which marched by the upper or Pennington road, reached the point of attack three minutes before Sullivan's, and, dividing, entered the town by two streets, one of which, Queens, now bears his name,— the only public record of his part in the battle :—¹

" Before this reaches you," he writes to his wife from Trenton, on the 30th, " doubtless you will hear of the attack upon this place. We crossed the river Delaware at McKonkee's ferry, eight miles above this place, on the 25th of this instant, and attacked the town by storm in the morning. It rained, hailed, and snowed, and was a violent storm. The storm of nature and the storm of the town exhibited a scene that filled the mind during the action with passions easier conceived than described. The action lasted about three quarters of an hour. We killed, wounded, and took prisoners of the enemy between eleven and twelve hundred. Our troops behaved with great spirit. General Sullivan commanded the right wing of the army, and I the left.

¹ Gordon, Vol. II. p. 395.

“This is an important period to America, big with great events. God only knows what will be the issue of this campaign, but everything wears a much better prospect than they have for some weeks past. The enemy are collecting their forces at Trenton, whether they mean to attack or to act upon the defensive.

“I am well in health, and hope to continue so. In a few weeks I hope to have a fine army together. I observe the enemy have got possession of Newport, and Joseph Wanton proclaimed Governor. I am sure the enemy cannot penetrate the country in New England as they have done here.

“Should we get possession again of the Jerseys, perhaps I may get liberty to come and see you. I pity your situation exceedingly; your distress and anxiety must be very great. Put on a good stock of fortitude. By the blessing of God I hope to meet again.”

When the battle was over, Greene went with Washington to visit the dying Rahl. What shall be done next? was now the question.

Greene was for following up the surprise of Trenton by a rapid pursuit of the enemy, and an immediate attack upon their other posts. But Knox was the only officer who agreed with him, and Washington, not yet feeling himself justified in overruling the opinion of a majority, reluctantly accepted its decision. “He has since regretted,” writes Gordon, “his not seizing the golden opportunity.”¹

“The year '76 is over. I am heartily glad of it, and hope you nor America will ever be plagued with such another,” writes Robert Morris to Wash-

¹ Gordon, Vol. II. p. 396.

ington on the 1st of January, 1777.¹ But the campaign was not over. The country had been roused by the surprise of Trenton, but it was necessary to prevent it from relapsing into the despondency of November and December. The enemy had been startled; it was necessary to turn their alarm into fear. Washington resolved to follow up the blow, and before his troops, most of whose terms of service were just expiring, left him, strike another, and, if possible, a decisive one, for the deliverance of the Jerseys.

On the 28th Greene recrossed the river with three hundred militia.² On the 30th Washington crossed with the Continentals. By personal appeals and the promise of ten dollars bounty, most of the Eastern men were prevailed upon to engage for six weeks longer; though many of them, if Gordon's information was correct, stayed only long enough to secure their money.³ The forces under Cadwallader and Mifflin, about three thousand six hundred in all, were called in from Crosswicks and Bordentown, reaching Trenton by a night march on the morning of the 2d of January. The poor fellows had hardly got out their camp-kettles, and kindled their fires, with the prospect of a quiet meal and a few hours' rest under the very same roofs which the week before had sheltered the Hessians when the drum beat to arms, and they were hurried forward to meet the enemy, who was advancing under

¹ Sparks's Correspondence of the Revolution, Vol. I. p. 316.

² Gordon, Vol. II. p. 398.

³ Gordon, Vol. II. p. 398; Washington to President of Congress,

Works, Vol. IV. p. 254.

Cornwallis by the old road from Princeton.¹ Some hours were passed in skirmishing, when Greene was ordered up with a strong detachment to the support of the advance. "I remember him," one of the soldiers of that day told me, in 1850,² "dashing up to the company I was in" (his own Rhode-Islanders, under Hitchcock, who had been with him from the beginning), "and calling out in a clear, loud voice, 'Push on, boys! push on!'"

But the pressure was too severe,— eight thousand disciplined men moving resolutely forward upon five thousand weary Continentals and militia.³ Still the retreat through the town was obstinately contested. The only passage to the main body was by a bridge over the Assanpink. On the east end Washington sat watching the progress of the conflict, with a "firm, composed, and majestic countenance," which the men looked on as they passed, and grew strong. His noble horse, pressing the railing with his broad breast, seemed conscious, thought the soldier who lived to tell the story, that "he too was not to quit his post and station."⁴ As soon as all were safe over, the cannon, which had been drawn aside to let the troops pass, were again brought into position, and, opening a well-directed fire, checked the enemy's advance. For a while the evening shadows, that were fast settling over the landscape, were lighted up by the flames from

¹ Stone's Life and Recollections of their comparative strength. Memoirs, John Howland, p. 72. Vol. I. p. 135.

² John Howland.

⁴ Stone's Howland, *ut sup.*

³ This is Wilkinson's estimate of

the muzzles of the guns, as cannon-ball and musket-ball darted forth on their deadly¹ errand. But soon the useless cannonading ceased; and both armies, separated only by the slender current of the Assanpink and the little hamlet of Trenton, not over a thousand yards in all, prepared themselves for a watchful night and bloody morning. The Americans gathered eagerly round their watch-fires, feeding the welcome flame with cedar rails from the neighboring fences.² As yet the weather was mild, and the ground, freed from the recent frost, soft and wet.

Meanwhile, Washington summoned his officers to council, at the head-quarters of St. Clair, his own being now in the hands of the enemy. "What shall we do? Shall we retreat down the Delaware, on the Jersey side, and cross it over against Philadelphia; or shall we remain where we are, and try the chances of a battle?" Each course had its advocates, when a voice was heard, saying, "Better than either of these, let us take the new road through the woods, and get in the enemy's rear by a march upon Princeton, and, if possible, on Brunswick even." From whom did this bold suggestion come? St. Clair claimed it as his; and why should the positive assertion of an honorable man be lightly called in question?³ But whose

¹ "The evening was so far advanced that I could distinguish the flames from the muzzles of our muskets."—Wilkinson, *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 138.

² Olney's narrative in Williams's *Life of Olney*.

³ See St. Clair's *Narrative*, p. 242; Wilkinson, Vol. I. p. 140; Gordon, Vol. II. p. 400.

ever it was, it was the inspiration of true genius, and was promptly accepted by all.

When the council broke up, a sudden change had taken place in the weather. The mist which had hovered over the landscape all through the day had disappeared ; and, though the night was very dark, the sky was cloudless. There was no wind, but the air was piercing cold, and the ground had already frozen hard enough to bear the heaviest weight without yielding.¹ All along the American line the fires were blazing brightly ; and the half-clad men, heaping the wood upon them with liberal hands, crouched behind them, unseen of the enemy, and ate their scanty suppers, thinking anxiously on the morrow.

It was soon time to begin the critical movement, on which their safety, and the war itself, depended. First, the baggage guard was summoned, and the baggage silently sent off towards Burlington. Then a strong fatigue party was set to work on an intrenchment near a mill, and so close to the enemy's lines, that they must have heard the heavy blows of pickaxe and spade upon the frosty ground, and almost have counted the falling of each frozen clod, as it was thrown into its place. If there were spies there, they probably hurried back to Cornwallis, and told him that he might sleep quietly till morning, for the Americans were determined to hold their ground. And thus the night wore slowly on. Some laid them down in their places,

¹ Gordon, Vol. I. p. 400 ; Wilkinson, Memoirs, Vol. I. p. 140.

and slept; some sat talking by the fire; some, perhaps, were busy with their arms, which they expected soon to put to use. Midnight came. The guards at the bridge, and at the upper passes, were doubled, and received their last orders. The fires were heaped up anew, and the drowsy British sentinels, as they looked across the narrow interval of flickering light and shade, and saw how cheerfully they blazed, may have said to themselves, "Do those rebels know what we are preparing for them to-morrow?" Little did they think that, behind that wall of flame, their skilful enemy was cautiously filing off into the dark wood, and turning his steps towards another victory. The order to move was given in so low a voice, that some officers were, for a moment, at loss which way they were to go. The road was newly cut, and rough with stubs, too low to be seen by starlight, but high enough to catch and bruise the men's feet, as they marched,—half-shod feet, we must remember,—and whose track, a few days before, Wilkinson tells us, he had traced for miles by their blood on the snow.¹ The slow pace of the artillery compelled the ranks to move slowly, and frequently to halt; and as they halted, "two or three men in each platoon would be seen standing, with their arms supported, fast asleep." Then the order to move on would come; and as the sleepers, rousing themselves, and pressed by the platoons from behind,

¹ Wilkinson Memoirs, p. 127.

attempted to move, they would often strike against a stub, and fall.¹

Day dawned upon them clear, and very cold. The sun rose as they were approaching a hill near Princeton; and as its rays fell upon it, Wilkinson, who was with the advance, thought that he saw a flashing along its ridge, as of burnished steel. "It must be the enemy," said he, "for the muskets of our poor fellows have no burnish to them." Harrison — Washington's secretary — was near him, and he called to him to observe it. But when he looked again, it was gone; and presently two horsemen were seen to leap a fence, ride forward a little ways, reconnoitre, and then spur back with their tidings. The enemy was indeed at hand; and in the short, sharp conflict which followed I catch but a single glimpse of Greene in an anecdote, which I will not vouch for, but which, as I read it, recalls to my mind a passage in one of his letters to Governor Cooke. In a charge, an officer by his side suddenly reigned up his horse to avoid passing over a human body. "On, sir," said Greene, sternly; "this is no time for stopping."

Thus far, Washington's bold strategy had succeeded. The road to Brunswick was open. Lee was there; other prisoners were there; abundant stores and supplies were there; and there, too, was the military chest, with seventy thousand pounds in hard money. To seize these had formed a part of Washington's original plan; and as he halted

¹ Stone's Howland, p. 75.

with several of his general officers at the forks in the Kingston road, while his victorious but weary troops were filing off towards Rocky Hill, there was a general cry, "O that we had five hundred fresh men to beat up their quarters at Brunswick."¹ "It would have put an end to the war," says Washington, sadly, in a letter to the President of Congress.² But the five hundred fresh men were not there, and in their stead was an army worn down by hunger and fatigue.

It was now that the happy resolution was adopted of proceeding to Morristown, and fixing winter quarters there. Knox, according to Gordon, suggested it; St. Clair, according to Wilkinson.³ Greene, who, being with the advance, had not been present at the discussion, had taken the Morristown road of his own accord, before the decision was known.⁴ That night the troops bivouacked at Somerset Court-House, many of them lying on the frozen ground without blankets.⁵ On the 6th they reached Morristown, wayworn and destitute, but victorious. The Revolution was saved.

¹ Wilkinson, *Memoirs*, p. 148.

⁴ Gordon, *ut sup.*

² Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 261.

⁵ Stone's *Howland*, p. 77; Wil-

³ Gordon, Vol. II. p. 402; Wil-

kinson, p. 148.

kinson, p. 149.

CHAPTER XIV.

Effect of Success on the Country and the Army.—Position of the Army.—Recreations of Winter Quarters.—Washington's Anxiety.—Greene shares it.—State Rights.—Death of Colonel Hitchcock.—Greene's Regret for the Loss of Mercer.—Greene in want of a Horse.—Expects Active Work.—Difficulties in Raising the New Army.—Correspondence with Governor Cooke.—Defends Washington.—Letters and Extracts.—Change Produced on the Character of the War by the Declaration of Independence.—Bounties.—Inoculation.—Delays caused by a Weak Government.

WITH lightened hearts, though weary limbs, the patriot army wound its slow way through the rough mountain passes which lead from the banks of the Raritan to the little village of Morristown. Wondering and admiring must the inhabitants have looked upon them, and listened to them, as they told how within ten days they had crossed the Delaware three times, had fought the Hessians once and the British regulars once, and defeated them both; had stolen a night march upon the active Cornwallis, and checked in mid career the course of rapine and outrage which had marked the English occupation of the Jerseys. And now the choice of continuing the winter campaign, or of lying still and recruiting their exhausted strength, rested with them; for betwixt them and the seaboard lay, like a fortress with its walls and

moat, part of the tortuous course of the Passaic, and three chains of sharp and rugged hills. Their new cantonment itself was on high table-land, with steep slopes on two of its sides; and the bold ridge of Thimble Mountain casting its shadows upon it from the west. They could look down as from a watch-tower on the lowlands, where their enemy lay; but no enemy could reach them without forcing his way through rugged passes, and exposing himself at every step to the deadly aim of well-trained marksmen. Forage was abundant, and within easy reach; provisions, though less abundant, yet enough so to carry them comfortably through the winter; and the air, though cold, was pure and healthy. It was the second winter encampment of the war; many of the men, and still more of the officers, had already served two campaigns together. Faces had grown familiar, and characters were fast becoming known in their weakness and in their strength. And for a softening background to the picture, as the army settled down in its quarters, Mrs. Washington came to camp; and other ladies joining their husbands, a little winter circle was formed, like the winter circle of Cambridge. There were sleigh-rides over the crisp snow, and dinner-parties at head-quarters, and now and then a subscription ball; and always hospitable firesides, where the grave and thoughtful could talk of their hopes and fears by the blazing hearth, and the young and cheerful play merry games. Greene's share

in these enjoyments was not what he would have wished it to be; for his wife was unable to join him till the winter camp was broken up, and the new campaign about to begin.

But his intimacy with Knox grew closer every day, and Hamilton's entrance into Washington's family added materially to the pleasure of his intercourse with head-quarters.

“I lodge,” he writes to his wife, “at Mr. Hoffman’s,—a very good-natured, *doubtful* gentleman. He has a charming wife, a great lover of the clergy. Major Clarke, one of my aide-de-camps, is eternally perplexing her with doubts and difficulties, by dark hints and oblique insinuations respecting the purity of manners and principles of the Church of England.

“The smile of Heaven has changed the face of affairs. Respect and courtesy flow in upon us from all quarters. This is a picture of human life. I see the difference betwixt moving on with the tide of success, or sinking under a load of misfortunes.”¹

For Washington the problem was still the same as that of the winter before Boston,—to mask his weakness by “a good face and false appearances.”² Here, too, he had a new army to raise, an old army to disband, raw recruits to drill, the spirits of the country to keep up by expeditions and skirmishes, the enemy to harass by cutting off their foraging parties and beating up their quarters, and grave questions to discuss with Congress for the correc-

¹ Greene’s MSS. Letters to Mrs. Greene. Letter of January 20, and February 1, 1777. ² Letter of May 21, quoted by Gordon, Vol. II. p. 467.

tion of past errors and the preparation for a more decisive future. Many new difficulties, also, had arisen, and some old ones swollen to dangerous proportions. But at the root of them all was an ill-timed jealousy of military influence, and still more avowedly the baneful question of State rights, which, enfeebling the Congress of the Revolution, reducing to impotence the Congress of the Confederation, and waging a ceaseless war against the Congress of the Union, attained, at last, to the fulness of its maturity as the ally of slavery in the great rebellion of 1860. The narrative of these things belongs to the life of Washington, entering into my subject only in as far as Greene acted with him in them. How far that action extended it is impossible to ascertain, but Hamilton suggests that it embraced the most important events;¹ and Greene's letters show that his thoughts were constantly directed, and with a singular harmony of judgment and feeling, to the same topics which occupied the mind of his commander, now almost his dearest friend.

“I am exceeding happy,” he writes to his wife, on the 20th of January, “in the full confidence of his Excellency General Washington; and I found that confidence to increase every hour, the more difficult and distressing our affairs grew.”

One of the earliest associations of this encampment was a painful one. I have already had occasion to mention, more than once, the name of

¹ Hamilton, *Eulogy on Greene, Works, Vol. II.* p. 480.

Daniel Hitchcock, who had accompanied Greene to Boston as colonel of one of the three regiments which formed the Rhode Island contingent. From that time to this he had continued with the army, performing, during the last few weeks, the duties of a brigadier, winning honor wherever honor was to be won, much loved by his own men, and respected by all. But fatigue and exposure had undermined his health: more than once sickness had kept him from the field;¹ and, a few days after the arrival of the army at Morristown, he died.² He was buried in what, in the course of the war, became a populous burying-ground; and, four years later, in another burying-ground, on the other bank of the Hudson, peopled like this with the victims of war, his friend and companion of Rhode Island's first contingent, Christopher Greene, was buried, as he had been, without any distinguishing record from the State they honored, or the country they served so well. Nor, although Greene had long ceased to look upon himself as the representative of a single State, have I been willing to pass over the fate of men so closely connected with the beginning of his military life, without telling how much he prized their services, and how deeply he lamented their death.

“He was buried,” Greene writes of Hitchcock, “with all the honors of war, as the last mark of respect we

¹ Greene's MSS. Olney's Narrative in Williams's Olney, p. 198. ² Stone's Howland.

could show him." And following up the melancholy train of thought which this death suggested, he adds, "Poor General Mercer is also dead of the wounds he received in the Princeton action. He was a fine companion, a sincere friend, a true patriot, and a brave general. May Heaven bless his spirit with eternal peace! Several more brave officers fell that day; particularly one Captain Neale, of the artillery. The enemy refused him quarter after he was wounded. He has left a poor widow over[whelmed] with grief. She is as fine a woman as ever I saw; her distress melts the hearts of all around her. . . . Such instances paint all the horrors of war beyond description."

Greene's own health had not suffered, incessant as had been his labors, and feeble as he had been at the opening of the campaign. His equipage had not fared so well. "I am miserably off," he writes to a friend on the 17th of January, "for want of a horse; you'll oblige me very much, if you can get me a good one." Daily rides over rough roads and in all weathers wore down his horses fast; and the way in which he speaks of them in his letters shows a tenderness for them which reminds us that with him, as with Washington, the horse had always been a favorite animal. But at this moment he felt the want more sensibly, as he was looking forward to active service. "The sooner a panic-struck enemy is followed, the better," Washington had written to Lincoln on the 7th.¹ But, in spite of Washington's desire to push them, they had had ten days to rest and gather

¹ Sparks's Washington, IV. p. 266.

courage in. "The enemy, for several days past," Greene writes on the 17th, "are remarkably still. I strongly suspect mischief" Awed, however, by the apparent strength of the Americans, they did not dare to move out in force; and although frequent skirmishes occurred between scouts and foraging parties, in which the Americans generally had the advantage, Washington was left free to give his attention almost undividedly to the other duties of his charge.

The new army was the first; and here was a new difficulty at the threshold, for, on adopting the bounty system, some Eastern States, reflecting that living was more expensive in their rough climate than in their sister States, had offered higher bounties than Congress¹ had done; and Rhode Island, alarmed by the presence of the enemy, instead of confining her exertions to the speedy filling up of the Continental battalions, had "set on foot two regiments of seven hundred and fifty men each, and one regiment of artillery of three hundred men to serve for fifteen months."² When Washington heard this, he wrote to Governor Cooke, condemning the measure as injudicious, and injurious to the general interest.³ Three days afterwards, the 23d of January, Greene, who, besides agreeing fully with Washington, felt that the

¹ Sparks's Correspondence of the Revolution, Vol. I. p. 342, contains an able exposition of the subject by Governor Trumbull, of Connecticut, one of the truly wise men of the day.

² Bartlett's Rhode Island Colonial Records, Vol. VIII. p. 140.
³ Sparks's Washington, IV. p. 285. Bartlett, *ut sup.*, 114.

honor of his native State was at stake, wrote even more strongly than Washington had done:—

“ I am exceeding unhappy to hear of your resolution of raising troops at the expense of the State, before your proportion of the Continental regiments is completed. The forming of new regiments only serves to burden the State, without giving it any additional strength.

“ There is not a State on the continent whose interest and happiness depends so much on a union with the others as yours. You are the most exposed and the least capable of making a separate defence; consequently, it is your interest to cultivate every measure that may tend to form the union of strength; and it must be considered bad policy to give an example to others, from which you can derive little or no advantage, and that may prove so ruinous in its consequences.

“ Suppose, for instance, every State was to neglect the completion of the Continental regiments, and prepare for their own internal security? where is the State that’s able to withstand the enemy’s collective force? If the continent had troops enough on foot to baffle all the enemy’s attempts, and were located to particular States, they must inevitably fall a sacrifice for want of a power of drawing the whole collective force together. You have no reason to hope, if you neglect the general interest, and take measures for your own particular safety, but that others will do the same; and it is folly to expect that troops raised for the defence of any particular State will enter into the service of the States. In general, it is in vain to expect more of soldiers than they are bound by contract to execute.

“ The source of all our evils has been, by taking measures from speculative principles, rather than from real life. The policy of the States has been pregnant with many

evils, by rating our patriotism too high. This kind of policy has distressed the army beyond description ; and, if I mistake not, this measure of yours has a direct tendency to continue things in the same channel ; it may afford you a temporary relief, but never can remove the principal evil.

“ Divine Providence has given a very favorable turn to affairs, and at an hour when people least expected it. *Now* is the happy hour to complete the Continental establishment. Every State to the southward is expecting itself to fill up its proportion ; not a moment should be lost. If the regiments don’t fill up by voluntary enlistments, they must be drafted. I hope the powers of government are strong enough to do it. I have not the least shadow of doubt upon my mind, of the success of the war, if the different States raise their men ; but on that the whole depends.

“ I hope the cause is not less righteous, nor opposition less necessary, than it was at the commencement of this dispute. It was a folly to embark in the cause, and sink under the weight of a few misfortunes. He that goes to war and always expects a flowing tide is a novice in the art, and ignorant of human affairs. Our sufferings, though great, bear no proportion to our expectations at first. Our resources are daily increasing ; we have now a fine nursery of officers, whose judgments are daily ripening by experience and observation. A systematic plan is formed for the exertion of our whole strength. Magazines, arms, and military stores of every kind, are forming and formed, to supply the wants of the army. If it was prudent to engage in this war without any of those advantages, how foolish must our conduct appear, to despair at an hour when we have much to hope and little to fear !

“ I must confess I did not expect to find the Americans

such slaves to contingencies, but more especially New England, and, in particular, Rhode Island. Such a depression of spirit under misfortunes, and elevation upon successes, betrays a want of principle and fortitude, that I would fain flatter myself were the foundation of our opposition. Let any man examine the history of any war in Europe, and compare ours with theirs, and see if there has anything happened different from the common course of events that attend every war. Nay, I think we have abundant cause to bless God that our sufferings have not been greater than they have. A general officer is in a very disagreeable situation ; subject to the censure and reproach of every little dirty politician, ignorant of every circumstance necessary to form a right judgment. But such is the disposition of mankind, that success only marks the man of wisdom, while the unfortunate are execrated without any allowances for providential interpositions or human accidents.

“ I am very sorry to hear of the distraction and confusion that prevails in your councils and public measures. The liberality with which you confer favors on some, and fix stigmas on others, must make men of real merit somewhat cautious how they put themselves in a situation where they may be reduced from the highest pitch of glory to the lowest state of contempt. It was ever the policy of the Romans to be cautious whom they trusted, and how they disgraced those they had once honored.

“ I saw a letter from one Malmedy, a French gentleman, to his Excellency General Washington, whom you have appointed a brigadier-general ; and a copy of a letter from General Lee, to your State, recommending him for a chief colonel’s commission. General Lee’s letter contains some infamous and very illiberal reflections upon the genius of all the New England States ;

however just the obstructions with respect to particular appointments, 't is certainly very unjust when applied to the whole body of the people. There are as many men of spirit, activity, and understanding in New England as in any part of the world, according to their numbers.

"A novelty of things of foreign growth often makes us rate them above those of more solid worth of our production. The gentleman that General Lee recommended may be deserving, and possess every quality ascribed to him; but I must confess that I have not the highest veneration for the General's recommendation. His temper scarce admits of a proper medium to form a just estimate of people and things. His approbation and execration depend often upon trifles; besides, the General don't know the power he has over the Americans, and consequently is not cautious enough in his recommendations not to abuse it.¹

"Some amongst you, I am told, are uncharitable enough to charge the army with a design of protracting the war for their own private advantage.² The bosom that can harbor such a thought must be very ill-principled, and ignorant of our sufferings. For my own part, Heaven knows there is not a man in America, that would more sincerely rejoice at the close of this unhappy dispute than myself! neither have I a single wish to continue in service a moment longer than the interest and happiness of my country require it. I would freely give place to any man that should be found more deserving. I am conscious of having faithfully discharged my duty to the utmost of my power; and although I have not been able to command success, I have religiously endeavored to deserve it. I am happy in the confidence of the General, whose merit and worth cannot be too highly rated.

¹ For further details of this affair, Colonial Records, VIII. pp. 111, 160, see Sparks's Washington, IV. pp. &c.
419, 422. Bartlett's Rhode Island ² See J. Adams to his Wife, p. 265.

“ Yet I am told there are some ungodly tongues among you (whose greatest virtue don’t equal the General’s very vices), who give themselves a latitude of censure.

“ Ever since the Trenton affair, we have had a continual train of successes. The Lord seems to have smote the enemy with a panic. I wish our strength would admit a proper improvement ; but our delicate situation requires the utmost caution and prudence. The enemy are near three thousand weaker than they were a month ago.

“ Our parties have daily skirmishes, in which we have been always successful. His Excellency has ordered General Heath to advance on New York, to co-operate with us, the result of which I have not learned ; but we have a rumor it is attended with success. Generals Spencer and Arnold are with you by this ; I long to hear of your situation. I expect General Knox will pass through Providence. I beg leave to recommend him to your warmest friendship as a most deserving man. His spirit, military knowledge, and ripeness of judgment is inferior to very few, if any, in America. I shall close this long letter with strongly recommending the filling the Continental regiments immediately.”

Greene had written in “ the style and freedom of one friend to another ” ; but the Governor was nettled, and laid the letter before the Assembly. They too were nettled, and directed him to write to Washington and Greene explaining their measures, and defending the policy of them. The troops, they asserted, were designed as much for the Continental service as for the service of the State ; the difference in time, fifteen months, instead of three years or the war, being the only difference between them.

“I am exceeding happy,” writes Greene in reply, “on the receipt of yours, to find my information erroneous, and my apprehensions and fears in a great degree groundless respecting your departure from the union and general plan.

“At the time I wrote, upwards of two months had elapsed without (my) receiving a single line from any person in the State; various reports were circulating here to the prejudice of the policy of New England; the enormous bounty that was given, the effect it would have upon the other States, the resolutions of your State to raise men for its own internal defence, neglecting the Continental regiments, were circumstances not a little alarming to his Excellency. These reports were confirmed by Lieutenant Allen, of Providence, who arrived from that place much about the same time. He must have been totally ignorant of the terms upon which the troops were raising; for I conceived them to be for the safety of the State only, and never knew but that they were located, until the receipt of your letter.

“I hope the house will pardon the freedom with which I delivered my sentiments, when I assure them that it was from a full persuasion that the reports were true, and that the measure was calculated to fix a lasting disgrace upon the legislators. I have felt no small share of unhappiness in remaining so long ignorant of the true history of your proceedings; for, notwithstanding I am not answerable for any misconduct in legislation, I cannot help feeling myself wounded when anything transpires to the prejudice of the State; and you may rest assured, sir, the language of my letter was a true transcript of people’s sentiments and opinions respecting your political transactions. If the love for my native place, and zeal for the cause, hath led me to a too hasty animadversion upon administration, it hath arisen from a strong

desire to correct the evil before it was rendered incurable. . . . If you consider the critical situation of the American affairs, the importance of adhering to the general plan, the short time we had to prepare for the ensuing campaign, the fatal consequences that might result from an unseasonable delay to myself, the army, and to the cause in general, you cannot be surprised to find my fears and apprehensions alarmed at the disagreeable situation things were reported to be in. . . . Had I known the governmental regiments differed from the continental only in point of time, I should have been silent upon the occasion ; notwithstanding the policy does not correspond with my sentiments. If the enemy had intended to penetrate into the country immediately upon their arrival, no new levies could have been raised seasonably ; if they did not, then the Continental regiments might have been as easily completed as any others.”¹

That Greene was right in his condemnation of this policy the sequel clearly showed. “It is also evident,” writes Washington in April, “that the raising of the Colonial brigades for fifteen months retards the Continental enlistments.”²

One of the strongest passages in Greene’s letter was the reference to the personal attacks upon Washington.

“You may be assured,” writes the Governor, “that the subjects of this State have the highest veneration for the inestimable General Washington, and a becoming respect for the brave and worthy generals and commanders under him, and cannot conceive on what the sugges-

¹ Bartlett, R. I. Colonial Records, Vol. VIII. pp. 137-211. ² Sparks’s Washington, Vol. IV. p. 375.

tions contained in your letter concerning him are founded, and request you will give us the authors of such infamous insinuation, that a proper inquiry may be had, and condign punishment inflicted upon such base calumniators." "I feel a singular pleasure," says Greene, in his answer, "in hearing his Excellency General Washington continues in such high estimation among you. The strictures that were made on the General's conduct by some of the inhabitants of Providence gave me great uneasiness; if a character so important, so truly worthy, is not shielded from calumny and reproach, what have lesser ones to expect ?

" Lieutenant Allen is the author, and from the character he bears I make no doubt of its truth; but had I conceived my letter was for the inspection of the General Assembly, I should not have troubled the House with such out-of-door politics."¹

Allen was called before the Council. " He tells us," writes Governor Cooke, " that he informed you that he had heard nothing to the prejudice of the generals from any persons of note in this place; but only mentioned to you some idle talk of Mr. Man, and some other persons of much less consequence.

" The Council were convinced that he might have given you quite different intelligence, from the representation he made to us of it. Upon the whole, I beg you to rest assured that General Washington and yourself are at present very high in the estimation of all respectable people in this State."²

" I observe your remarks upon the army on the other side of the North River. I am at a loss whether you mean to impeach the troops or the General through the troops. If the charge is against the former, they can be

¹ Bartlett, Vol. VIII. *ut sup.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 216.

of no use to us here, for if they will not fight there, neither will they here ; but if the charge is against the General, I would only observe, that, under the cloud of misfortunes, the same reproaches lay against the Commander-in-chief as now lie against that army. But you see that time has proved the prudence and wisdom of the General's delays. I would not be understood to mean to draw a parallel between the men. I would further observe, for your satisfaction, that a considerable part of the troops on the other side are ordered over here, and are now on their march to join us ; *but all this under the rose.* My dear sir, you may rest assured, the routing the enemy from the Jerseys is a most desirable object with the General ; but who can form so good a judgment of the practicability as he who knows the strength on both sides ? This is a critical era. The new army in its infancy, we unable to support misfortunes, great caution is necessary to preserve our standing. Did you but know the real situation of things, you would applaud the General's prudence. I shall only add, that nothing but the fullest conviction of your prudence and zeal would have induced me to unbosom myself with so much freedom."

The general whose conduct had been called in question was General Heath, who had just failed, and, as some thought, from over-caution, in an attempt upon Fort Independence.

It was about this time that many of the questions that ought to have been addressed to Washington began to be addressed to Greene, who, in his answers, is careful always to put Washington's name foremost, very much as a Secretary of State puts foremost the name of the President.

“ Your favor of the 8th and 10th are before me,” the letter to Major Caldwell begins. “ In answer to your first, respecting the conditions upon which the light-horse are to be raised, I can only say the Continental Congress have not fixed upon any certain conditions : they have the matter now under consideration. Whatever rank, pay, or provision is fixed upon for the horse in general, such will be the pay of the company the Doctor is to raise. His Excellency desires that he would not get any but good men and horses ; the horses to be valued, and the men properly accoutred ; an account of the cost and charges to be kept, a warrant for the payment of which will be given. The General is not inclined to raise a company of light-horse upon the plan you propose. With respect to exempting the militia from service to thresh their grain, General Maxwell can better judge of the propriety and utility of the measure. His Excellency, therefore, refers you to him ; but, at the same time, would observe, as this is a critical period, it may be dangerous to open a door for the militia falling off. His Excellency thinks we had better suffer the loss of a little grain than reduce our strength.”

The intimate footing upon which he lived with Washington appears still more clearly from the letters that passed between them in their occasional separations. Thus when, in the course of February, Greene had his quarters for a while at Baskingridge, he writes to Washington on the 20th :—

“ Your favor of the 18th came to hand last evening. I shall pay due attention to its contents ; but I fear my situation is too remote to carry on a communication of intelligence to advantage. Ever since I have been here, I have been revolving the matter over and over in my mind respecting the subject of intelligence.

“ Nothing more eligible has occurred than the plan your Excellency suggests ; but I hope the old channel of intelligence is not yet shut up. Day before yesterday I was at Boundbrook and Quibbletown ; there I met with Mr. Lowrey, the commissary, who informed me the same person that was employed by Colonel Read and Colonel Cox was expected out that day with intelligence, the purport of which he promised to forward to you immediately.

“ I transmitted a return yesterday by Major Clarke to head-quarters, with the strength of the brigades, and the places they are posted at. Lord Sterling has but few troops in his brigade, except McCoy’s regiment, and they are all at Quibbletown.

“ Lord Sterling, General Johnson, and myself will endeavor to fix upon the best places to collect the troops at ; little more can be done than agree upon proper alarm-posts, and make the troops and ourselves acquainted with the ground. In order to make the troops acquainted with the ground, I propose to send down scouting-parties daily,— not so much for the annoyance of the enemy as to get them acquainted with the ground, and to keep them employed.

“ Should the enemy advance, my plan would be to attack with the light troops on the rear and upon the flanks, avoiding a general engagement, unless we can attack them on advantageous ground, where they can bring but part of their troops to act. I am unacquainted with General Putnam’s strength ; but if he has any considerable force, Brunswick should be his object, by all means.

“ But I must confess, I think General Putnam is in much more danger than we. I cannot help still apprehending Philadelphia to be their object ; the consequence to them, and injury to us, is infinitely greater than beating up our quarters here, and fighting us upon such disadvantageous ground.

“ If the enemy have no expectation of crossing the Delaware, I should think they would move toward Trenton, to draw our forces on the flat country: there they may give us a capital blow, here they cannot; in the flat country their artillery is of great importance, here it is not; there regular troops can act to advantage, here they cannot, — at least, they have not that superiority as they would have there. Our troops are almost all irregular, and they know it. If they consult their own interest, they will avoid fighting us upon our ground, that we are acquainted with and they ignorant of. Upon the whole, I think General Howe will find it difficult to move, any way; but if he moves at all, I am confident it will be towards Philadelphia. But, notwithstanding, I will make the best preparation our situation will admit. Lord Sterling is going below to-morrow, to endeavor to fix upon some plan to get intelligence. I will meet General Sullivan at the same time, and form a plan for the purpose of supporting each other.

“ We sent down forty wagons after forage yesterday. Their success I have not yet heard, but they are mostly returned. This moment the quartermaster came in, and reports they all got full loads, and have returned safe. They were within a mile of the enemy’s quarters.”

It is evident, from the unreserved tone of these letters, the minuteness of the details, and the freedom with which the opinions are uttered, and the advice given, that Greene and Washington were living upon very intimate terms. It is evident, too, that much of their conversation, when together, must have been equally free and minute, comprehending, in its wide range, all the interests of the army and all the questions of the time. I shall

follow their correspondence during the rest of this important year as closely as my materials will permit; for it was during this year, and more especially during this winter, that these great men, applying the experience of their two first campaigns, and calmly weighing the obstacles that lay in their path, and their means of overcoming them, were so closely drawn together by a full accordance of opinions and motives, that smaller minds, both in the army and in Congress, began to look upon their union with jealousy, and the enemies of the one became, henceforth, the enemies of the other.

There was one essential difference between their present situation and their situation in the camp before Boston, and a difference widely in their favor. For then the object of the war was limited to a redress of grievances; and those who knew that their grievances had reached that degree in which redress is no longer possible, were unable to prepare for the long and difficult contest that awaited them as they would have prepared for it if the people had foreseen what they foresaw. But the Declaration of Independence had removed this stumbling-block from their path, imposing greater exertions, it is true, but strengthening the hearts and hands of all for these exertions by setting the same distinct and definite object before all. It was no longer a simple question of redress, but the grand and comprehensive question of nationality.

It was acknowledged now that an army ought to be raised for the war, and Congress would gladly

have raised the new army upon that footing. But they could no longer do this as they might have easily done it in the beginning. Bounties and land-grants were now required,—bounties of twenty dollars and land-grants of an hundred acres to those who enlisted for the war. Even those offers were insufficient to fill the ranks, and far the larger portion of the newly enlisted troops enlisted, not for the war, but for three years, although the bounty was but ten dollars, and there was no grant of land. Here, however, a new difficulty arose. Additional bounties were offered by some of the States, Massachusetts raising hers to sixty-six dollars and two thirds. And thus the soldiers of the army of 1776, who were willing to enter the new army, instead of taking the Congress bounty, and enlisting in camp, took out their discharges, and went home, in order to secure the State bounty by enlisting there. It is easy to conceive the additional embarrassment that arose from this want of concert between the State governments and the national government. It is easy, too, to conceive how often Washington and Greene, on whom the unnecessary burden fell heaviest, must have said to each other, with anxious misgivings, “ When shall we learn that there is no safety for us but in union ? ”¹

¹ See Journals of Congress, Wednesday, June 26, 1776; Monday, September 16, 1776; Washington to Knox, February 11, 1777, with a valuable note by Mr. Sparks; Washington’s Works, Vol. IV. p. 316; Governor Trumbull to Washington, February 21, 1777; Correspondence of the Revolution, Vol. I. p. 342.

One of the first things that this new army required was security against the scourge which had made such havoc in the old, and so often swept over the whole country with such fearful desolation. The small-pox, in spite of science, confirmed by experience, was still permitted to hang with a constant menace over the land, and never so fatally as where many men were gathered together in common dwellings. What they became when the monster broke loose amongst them our own recollections of the cholera will readily suggest. Attention to this danger, and to inoculation as the only safeguard against it, had been given, from time to time, from the beginning of the war, when circumstances permitted it. But during this winter, a regular system of inoculation was instituted, and the new recruits carried through the disease before they entered upon active service. One of the districts for inoculation was at Morristown; and, in order to induce the inhabitants to open their doors to the sick, the army surgeons were directed to inoculate their families without charge. Never was a wise and beneficent measure more completely successful.¹

In our study of these things we must still bear in mind that they were done, not by means of the vivifying energy of a good government, but in despite of the hesitations and delays of a weak gov-

¹ Ramsay, History of the American Revolution, Vol. I. p. 327, whom I cite in preference to many others, as his professional tastes led him to give particular attention to the subject.

ernment. The machinery by which the work was accomplished was made while the work was doing; and even after it had been made, it was often difficult to keep the parts together. When the hospitals were organized, hundreds that might have been saved had already died for want of them. When the quartermaster distributed the clothes and shoes, half the army was nearly naked and barefooted. When the commissary brought in his supply of provisions, the men were on the brink of starvation. When the paymaster came round with money, biting want had already compelled both soldier and officer to pledge his share in advance for scarce half its value.

“It is the peculiar misfortune of this army,” Washington writes to Greene in May, “to have, generally speaking, the heads of the different departments always absent when they are most wanted. Two months was I laboring as hard as I could to get the commissary-general to this place, and had scarcely accomplished it before the Congress ordered him to Philadelphia; from whence I have used my utmost endeavors to bring him back, but am answered that he is detained by order. In the mean while, the army may starve.”¹

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. IV. p. 437. See also a passage in Vol. V. p. 314.

CHAPTER XV.

Improved State of Public Feeling.—Successful Expeditions and their Effect.—Hamilton's Entrance into Washington's Family.—Correspondence with John Adams resumed.—Washington's Opinion of the Policy of Congress in the Case of General Lee.—Growth of Hostility in Congress towards Washington.—Greene sent to Philadelphia.—Appears before Congress.—Committee appointed to confer with him.—Letters.—Life in Philadelphia.—Returns to Camp.

THREE was one bright side, however, to the picture of these anxious months. The spirit awakened by the successes of Trenton and Princeton had not been suffered to die away. “The Tories are melting away very fast in this country,” Greene writes to his wife as early as January. “The different treatment they meet with from the enemy from what they expect works great reformations.” If the British ventured out of their stronghold, they were boldly attacked, and generally with a sufficient degree of success to excite a desire on the part of the Americans for a further trial of strength. Three of these encounters are recorded in a single letter,—a letter from Baskingridge of February 24, to Colonel G. Weedon, Adjutant-General.

“A large foraging party of the enemy came out yesterday from Amboy, consisting of about four thousand; our people attacked them with various success. Colonel Striker says our parties killed and wounded three wagon-

loads. Eleven was seen dead in one place. The enemy's cannon gave them a great superiority over our people. The foraging party continued out till night, and our parties followed them towards Amboy till quite dark. Our party lost about eight or ten men, whether killed, wounded, or taken prisoners is uncertain. This party took seven prisoners. The party that made this attack was from General Maxwell's brigade, Hand's and Striker's regiment, and part of Colonel McKay's. The attack began about eleven in the forenoon. I was out from home at Turkey reviewing one of the brigades, or else I should (have) sent an express last night.

"Colonel Johnson was down with a party of Maryland militia,—made an attack upon Piscataway; he killed three, and if his men had stood their ground they would have taken forty men. He formed an ambush, and sent out a flying party to draw them into it; it succeeded according to his expectation, but his party cowardly deserted him just as the enemy was in his power.

"General Warner sent out a party last night to bring off their picket at the bridge. The guide was deceived in the ground, and led the party between the out-sentries and the guard. They took two prisoners and drove the enemy, but what execution was done is uncertain."

The report of encounters like these, amounting sometimes, like Dickinson's in January, and Nelson's in February, to brilliant captures, was spread over the country by letters and newspapers, raising some extravagant expectations indeed, and in so far acting injuriously upon the public mind, but generally filling it with hopes that prepared the way for more vigorous exertion.¹ This spirit was

¹ Ramsay, American Revolution, Vol. I. p. 140 (revised ed. Ch. XII.; Marshall, Life of Washington).

fostered also by the cruelty of the enemy, who had not yet discovered how completely their outrages during the invasion of December had imbibited the inhabitants against them. "The enemy," says Greene, in a short postscript to Colonel Weadon, "killed two of the inhabitants yesterday because they did not assist them with their wagons to carry off their dead. One they shot through the head, the other they killed with a bayonet."

But another incident of this time, of great importance to the common cause, but to Greene a bright gleam of sunshine, ever growing brighter and brighter as the general darkness thickened, was Hamilton's entrance into the family of the Commander-in-chief as aide-de-camp, on the 1st of March. Hamilton, as has already been seen, had attracted Greene's attention during the summer of '76, but, strongly as they were drawn towards each other, their intercourse had been controlled during the busy months that followed by their relative positions and duties rather than by their inclinations. Now, however, it quickly ripened into friendship. Greene was at head-quarters daily, as a counsellor and friend. Hamilton was always there to meet him as the confidential secretary of the man they both loved and honored. Their views seldom differed, if ever, both with regard to persons and to things, and each found in the other's mind an energy, an activity, a vigor of grasp, a breadth of comprehension, a quickness of conception, and a power of patient thought, which he recognized as the dis-

tinctive characteristics of his own. Family tradition has always represented Hamilton as the object of Greene's peculiar affection; and Hamilton, who lived to put his opinion of Greene upon record, bore witness to "the enormous powers of his mind," under circumstances which would have made exaggeration a satire.¹

It was at this time also that Greene's correspondence with John Adams, which had been interrupted during Adams's long absence from Congress, was resumed. It was useful as a means of bringing his ideas before Congress, and occasionally entering a timely protest against injudicious measures. It was useful, too, as a means of ascertaining the views of leading men, by eliciting those of a man who, in despite of his vanity and violent passions, was undoubtedly a chief among them. The first of these letters was written from Baskingridge, March 3d.

"It is a long time since I wrote to you or you to me; who stands in debt upon the score of letters I cannot tell; therefore I shall begin anew. If you have time and inclination, you will give it an answer; if not, I shall consider it as the ladies do their visits after marriage; if there's no return, the acquaintance drops.

"I believe you are pretty well convinced of the truth of the observation I made to you last summer, which was that you were playing a desperate game. I fancy your ideas and mine differed very widely at that time respect-

¹ I borrow this expression from Hamilton's Eulogium on Greene, pronounced before the Cincinnati July 18, 1789. Nothing but illness prevented Washington from forming one of the audience. Surely every word that was written for such an audience would be carefully pondered. See Hamilton's Works, Vol. II. p. 482.

ing the state of things. You consulted your own feelings rather than the history of mankind in general. I am sensible you have not the most exalted opinions of your *generals*. Who is in fault? Every one would wish to be an Epaminondas, Sertorius, or Turenne, if they could, but if Nature has refused to crown the sons of America with such choice gifts, who is to blame? either she or we? We cannot be blamable only as we stand in the way of better men. I can speak for myself, although I have no wish to leave the service, yet I value the freedom and happiness of America so much higher than I do my own personal glory, that I am ready at all times to give place to a better man.

“ I am sensible, from a review of the last campaign, there appears some considerable defects in the counsels and conduct of its operations; but give me leave to tell you, sir, that our difficulties were inconceivable to those that were not eye-witnesses to them. To expect that bravery, firmness, and good conduct from undisciplined troops that is only to be found among veteran soldiers [is unjust]. General Howe had, the last campaign, a large and well-supported army; this army [was] strongly appointed in all its operations, with a very formidable naval force. Our forces were hastily drawn together, no time to discipline or form them,—very few that had ever been in action. We had the enemy’s intentions to collect, a large extent of country on the bays and rivers to guard. It is true we have met with some misfortunes, and great ones too, but not more so than might have been expected, considering their strength and our situation. Perhaps the generals may be thought blamable for not fighting more. I must confess I advised to the bringing on an action at the White Plains, and then thought it right, as our army was wasting away and the ground being very strong on which the army lay; but the discipline of

the British troops and the superiority of their artillery might have given a general defeat. In that case, the consequences would have been terrible. The alternative was disagreeable ; if we did not defeat the enemy, the dissolution of our army was soon to take place and they left at liberty to range at large. General Howe has invariably pursued the maxims of an invader, this campaign, endeavoring to bring us to a general action and avoid skirmishing. General Washington, as every defender ought, has followed directly the contrary conduct by endeavoring to skirmish with the enemy at all times and avoid a general engagement. The short term of enlistment and the still shorter aid of the militia has lost us almost all the benefit of these skirmishes. America abounds with materials to form as good an army as the world can produce ; but it requires time, for nothing but habit makes the soldier, and pride the officer. I am in hopes, if the new army fills agreeable to the resolutions of Congress, that America will display in some future campaign as much heroism and bravery as Europe can boast of. With these advantages, if the reputation of the American arms is not supported, let censure fall on the heads of the guilty. I know that success marks the man of wisdom, while the unfortunate are execrated without any allowance for Providential accidents or misfortunes. Let us bury our past errors in the cabinet and field, and join heart and hand in concerting and executing the most effectual measures to free America from her cruel oppressors.

“ I beg leave to make some inquiry into the policy of some late resolutions of Congress that respects General Lee. Why is he denied his request of having some persons appointed to confer with him ? Can any injury arise ? Will it reflect any dishonor upon your body to gratify the request of one of your generals ? Suppose

any misfortune should attend him immediately, will not all his friends say he was made a sacrifice of ? that you had it in your power to save him, but refused your aid ? He says in his letter he has something of the last importance to propose with respect to himself, and adds, perhaps not less so as to the public. You cannot suppose the general would hold out a profession to bring us into disgrace or servitude. If he would, it is certainly our interest to know it seasonably, that we may not make a sacrifice for a man that is undeserving of it. If he would not, 'tis certainly a piece of justice due to his merit to give him a hearing. To hear what he has to propose cannot injure us, for we shall be at liberty to approve or reject his proposition. But let us consider it in another point of view. Will not our enemies, the disaffected, improve this report to our prejudice ? They will naturally say, that General Howe had a mind to offer some terms of peace, and that you refused to lend an ear or give him a hearing, and that you were obstinately bent on pursuing the war, although evidently to the ruin of the people. Had you not consented to hear General and Lord Howe last spring, the public never would have been satisfied, but that there might have been an accommodation upon safe and honorable conditions. For my own part, I could wish you to give General Lee a hearing. But whether you give him a hearing or not, I cannot help thinking the sacrifice you are making for General Lee is impolitic as respects the Hessians, and unjust as it respects our prisoners with General Howe. The cartel that was settled between General Washington and General Howe, was an exchange of officers for officers of equal rank, soldiers for soldiers, and citizens for citizens. General Howe has never refused this mode of exchange, and is now pressing of us to comply with it. Had we an officer of equal rank with General Lee, we might demand him with some

propriety, or had we an equal or superior number of officers prisoners with us, the doctrine of retaliation would be reasonable and just; but to retaliate for the injury offered to one is bringing distress on many for no valuable purpose. General Howe has upwards of three hundred of our officers in his hands; and we only about fifty of his. If we put six field-officers in confinement because General Lee is kept confined, General Howe will immediately order an equal number of ours under the same confinement. The officers themselves will have cause of complaint, and all their friends will clamor loudly. If General Howe should not retaliate upon our officers, but call them together, show them they are in his power, by us devoted to destruction, and then enlarge them, it will totally detach them and their connections from our cause. If we make a sacrifice of the enemy, we don't hear the groans and see the tears of their mourning friends; but if any of our officers fall a sacrifice, these multiplied distresses are amongst us continually sounding in our ears. But the worst consequences and the most to be dreaded is the effect it will have upon the *Hessians*. The mild and gentle treatment the Hessian prisoners have received since they have been in our possession has produced a great alteration in their disposition. Desertion prevails among them. One whole brigade refused to fight or do duty, and were sent prisoners to New York. Rancor and hatred prevails between them and the British soldiery. It should be our policy to increase this hatred, not take a measure that may heal the difference. General Howe has been spreading papers among the Hessians with accounts of our having sold the Hessian prisoners for slaves. This severity to their officers will but too strongly confirm them in the account. If we can alienate the foreign troops from the British service, we inevitably ruin Great Britain, for her own natural strength

is totally insufficient to conquer and hold in subjection these States. If the foreign troops that are here can be debauched, Great Britain must be discouraged from employing any more, as so little reliance is to be placed upon them. For these and many other reasons that will readily occur to you, I would wish the resolution respecting retaliation might be suspended for a time, at least, especially as General Lee's confinement is not strict. The situation of our army forbids our doing anything that may alarm the fears of the people anew. We have but the shadow of force; and are more indebted to the weather for security than to our own strength. I fear your late promotions will give great disgust to many. But whatever promotions you intend to make, pray let them be completed as soon as possible, that those difficulties of reconciling discontented persons may not be at a time when harmony and concord is necessary. You'll excuse the freedom I have taken, and pardon what's amiss.”¹

¹ Greene MSS. This is the letter which suggested to Mr. Charles F. Adams the following remarkable commentary: “General Greene continued to write as he had done the year before. He repeated his conviction that the game was desperate, though this would make no difference in his resolution to see it out.”

Mr. Adams's answer contains, among other passages, the following:—

“Our late promotions may possibly give disgust, but that cannot be avoided. This delicate point of honor, which is really one of the most putrid corruptions of absolute monarchy,—I mean the honor of maintaining a rank superior to abler men,—I mean the honor of prefer-

ring a single step of promotion to the service of the public, must be bridled. It is incompatible with republican principles. I hope, for my own part, that Congress will elect annually all the general officers. If, in consequence of this, some great men should be obliged at the year's end to go home and serve their country in some other capacity, not less necessary and better adapted to their genius, I do not think that the country would be ruined. Perhaps it would be no harm. The officers of the army ought to consider that the rank, the dignity, and the rights of whole States are of more importance than this point of honor; more, indeed, than the solid glory of any particular officer. The States insist, with

If we turn to Washington's correspondence, we shall find him writing, on the 1st of March, to the President of Congress:—

“Though I sincerely commiserate the misfortunes of General Lee, and feel much for his present unhappy situation, yet, with all possible deference to the opinion of Congress, I fear that these resolutions will not have the desired effect,—are founded in impolicy, and will, if adhered to, produce consequences of an extensive and melancholy nature.” And, on the 2d, to Robert Morris: “I wish, with all my heart, Congress had gratified General Lee, in his request. If not too late, I wish they would do it still.”

In other letters his language is even stronger with regard to Lee; and as to the system of choosing general officers from each State, in proportion “to the number of men which they furnish, . . . I confess,” he writes to Arnold, on the 3d of April, “this is a strange mode of reasoning.”¹

It is evident, from this constant harmony of opinion upon the most important subjects, that Washington and Greene were in the habit of discussing them together; and if we would give the power of

great justice and sound policy, on having a share of the general officers in some proportion to the quotas of troops they are to raise. This principle has occasioned many of our late promotions, and it ought to satisfy gentlemen. But if it does not, they as well as the public must abide the consequences of their discontent.”

When we consider the relative positions of the Congress and the army, and remember their relative duties,—one party discussing and

voting in a “warm room,” and eating luxurious dinners, the other “freezing and starving on a bleak hillside,” —I use Washington’s words,—and remember, moreover, that it was no longer by votes, but by hard fighting, that the contest was to be decided, we may be excused for wishing that John Adams had never written these words. See Adams’s Works, Vol. I. p. 263.

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. IV. pp. 334, 341, 342, 378.

patient investigation and severe examination which each of them is known to have possessed its due weight, it is fair to suppose that each brought to the discussion a full share of independent thought. It is equally evident, from this and all his other letters of this period, that Greene was confident the contest would be successful, if the people did their duty. "I hope," ends one of his letters to Governor Cooke, "if heaven continues to smile upon us, and the respective States furnish their proportion of men, to exterminate from this land of liberty those hostile invaders of human happiness and the rights of mankind."¹

It was all-important that the door of Congress should be kept open for Washington's friends, for it had been opened very wide to his enemies. The cabal which reached its height early in the following winter had already begun to raise its loathsome head. And if we follow closely the action of Congress upon the counsels and suggestions of the Commander-in-chief, we shall discover even in its own meagre journals the traces of an incipient hostility. In spite of Washington's earnest and repeated representations, Congress had never taken measures in season for filling up the army, and making the necessary appointments. Yet, in February, while Washington was still holding the enemy at bay, with a shadow of an army, it did not hesitate to insert in its resolutions a "pompous paragraph" about the "earnest desire of Congress to make the

¹ Greene MSS. Letter of March 6, 1777.

army under the immediate command of General Washington sufficiently strong, not only to curb and confine the enemy within their present quarters, and prevent them from deriving support of any kind from the country, but, by the Divine blessing, totally to subdue them before they are reinforced." Four States were against this paragraph, six—the four Eastern, with Virginia and Georgia—in favor of it. What it really meant may be gathered from a letter of Mr. Burke, of North Carolina, to the Governor: "There appeared, through this whole debate, a great desire, in some of the delegates of the Eastern States, and in one from New Jersey, to insult the General."¹

It is not difficult to imagine how Washington looked when he handed the letter, with this half-drawn dagger in it, to Greene, and what a bitter smile rested upon Greene's lips as he read it. "Could I accomplish the important objects so eagerly wished by Congress," wrote Washington, in reply, "I should be happy indeed. But what prospect or hope can there be of my effecting so desirable a work at this time? The enclosed return, to which I solicit the most serious attention of Congress, comprehends the whole force I have in Jersey." That force amounted to three thousand men fit for service, two thousand of whom were militia.²

¹ Journals of Congress, February 22, 1777. Sparks's Washington, Vol. IV. pp. 326, 327, note.

¹ Sparks's Washington, Vol. IV. p. 362.

One of the pretexts employed by Washington's enemies in Congress was the pretext of State rights, and Mr. Abraham Clark, a delegate from New Jersey, came prominently forward, as one of its earliest advocates. To counteract the injurious effects of the proclamation issued, on the 30th of November, by Lord and Sir William Howe,¹ Washington had issued, on the 25th of January, a counter-proclamation, calling upon all who had taken out protections from the English general to give them up, and take the oath of allegiance to the United States. "The General's proclamation is a violation of our civil rights," wrote Mr. Clark to Mr. Dayton. "Each State requires an oath to that particular State. In many other things the proclamation is exceptionable, and very improper. I believe the General is honest, but I think him fallible."²

How far Washington was aware of the existence of this hostile spirit in Congress is uncertain, but he was well aware that something more urgent than a letter was required to induce that dilatory body to hasten its steps. Could he have gone to Philadelphia himself, laid his plans publicly before Congress as a whole, and reasoned in private with individual members, the ascendancy of his personal character might have done much towards filling the opening breach, and obtaining the necessary action. But he could not leave the army at

¹ Force, American Archives, 5th Series, Vol. III. p. 927. ² Sparks's Washington, Vol. IV. pp. 297, 298, note.

so critical a moment, and therefore, as the nearest approach to going himself, he sent Greene.

“ The difficulty, if not the impossibility,” he writes the President of Congress, on the 18th of March, “ of giving Congress a just idea of our situation (and of several other important matters requiring their earliest attention), by letter, has induced me to prevail on Major-General Greene to wait upon them for that purpose. This gentleman is so much in my confidence, so intimately acquainted with my ideas, with our strength and our weakness, with everything respecting the army, that I have thought it unnecessary to particularize or prescribe any certain line of duty or inquiries for him. I shall only say, from the rank he holds as an able and good officer, in the estimation of all who know him, he deserves the greatest respect, and much regard is due to his opinions in the line of his profession. He has upon his mind such matters as appear to me most material to be immediately considered, and many more will probably arise during the intercourse you may think proper to honor him with ; on all which I wish to have the sense of Congress, and the result of such deliberations as may be formed thereupon.”¹

Greene’s instructions are dated on the same day:—

“ The necessity of having the Congress well informed of many matters essential to the well-being of this army, and the impracticability of doing this by letter, have induced me to request you, who intimately know our circumstances, to repair immediately to Philadelphia for this purpose, and, at the same time, ascertain how we are to be supplied with arms, and many other articles, in which

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. IV. p. 368.

we are exceedingly deficient. To enumerate the several matters of information necessary to be given, and the inquiries proper to be made, would be as needless as endless ; your own good sense, assisted by such hints as you have received, will be abundantly sufficient.

“ Two or three things, however, I must in a more particular manner recommend to your attention ; one is the embarrassment I am laid under with respect to carrying the exchange of prisoners into execution, agreeably to the cartel settled with General Howe, by order of Congress, on account of the confinement of Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell and the Hessian field-officers. I would have you inquire of the quartermaster-general how he stands provided with tents, ammunition, carts, wagons for intrenching tools, and hatchets, or tomahawks ; also, of the commissary of stores, how he proceeds with his casting of cannon and making of cartridges, of which numbers should be in readiness ; and, generally, what forwardness the business of the laboratory is in, and urge him to the most diligent discharge of the duties thereof.

“ One thing in particular I beg of you to impress strongly upon Congress, and that is the necessity of keeping the paymaster regularly supplied with the article of cash ; without it everything moves slowly ; and many and great disadvantages flow from the want of it, as we have most wofully experienced of late in numberless instances. As the establishment of the light-horse, with respect to the pay, seems to be upon an unstable footing, and it is indispensably necessary that both officers and men should know what they have to depend upon, I should be glad if the pay could be settled upon such a just and liberal footing as to give satisfaction to the parties.”¹

With those documents in hand, and in his mind

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. IV. p. 367.

things still more important which it was not deemed wise to put upon paper, Greene repaired promptly to Philadelphia. It was his first sight of the Quaker City, and his first meeting with Congress. "A letter of the 18th from General Washington," says the Journal for Thursday, March 20th, "brought by General Greene was read:—

"*Ordered*, That General Greene attend Congress to-morrow at eleven o'clock."

Eleven o'clock came, and Greene presented himself at the door; not, however, if we may trust his well-known habit of turning every moment and every circumstance to account, without having talked awhile in the outer hall with members whom he knew, and sought the acquaintance of others whom it was desirable to know. Then, with somewhat of ceremony borrowed from England, he was ushered into Independence Hall. There, in a chair raised a little above the others, dignified, graceful, with a ready smile and a fluent tongue, sat John Hancock, the first signer of the Declaration. Right below him was a lean man, with deep wrinkles furrowing his face, eyes that flashed and sparkled as they looked out from their deep sockets, and lank white hair combed straight down upon his head, but not long enough to cover his ears. The table before him covered with papers, and the busy pen showed at first glance that this was Secretary Charles Thompson, whose name stands second on the Declaration.¹ Greene believed

¹ *Nouveau Voyage dans l'Amérique, etc.*, par M. l'Abbé Robin.

already in union, yearned for it, looking to it as the only source of strength and peace and prosperity. But did not some misgiving rise in his mind as he turned from the firm Puritan face of Sam Adams, written all over with 'I can and I will,' to the 'You must and you shall' that looked out with equal distinctness from the keen eyes of the South Carolina Rutledge and the thin lips of Richard Henry Lee? William Ellery sat in Samuel Ward's place,—a good and a true man; but did not Greene long for the familiar face of that wise and upright friend, to tell him what the lurking distrust in the eye of Abraham Clark meant? Yet be it mistrust, or caution, or curiosity, or whatever it might, he was there to do Washington's will and speak in Washington's name; and his heart and mind told him that the salvation of the country, and all the interests involved in her holy cause, depended upon his doing both firmly but wisely. Why did not Charles Thompson write out in full the words that were said during that two hours' interview? and why has not some diary preserved for us the picture of the soldier in his uniform, returning to his habits as a legislator, and addressing the national council in the same straightforward and earnest language with which he had so often addressed the Rhode Island Assembly?¹ But all that Charles Thompson has recorded is,—

¹ It is impossible to touch upon and not regret the meagreness of its any interesting incident in the history Journals.
of the Congress of the Revolution

“*Ordered*, That the committee appointed on the 13th to confer with General Gates do also confer with General Greene on the several matters given in charge to him by General Washington, and that three members be added to the committee.

“The members chosen, Mr. Wilson, Mr. S. Adams, and Mr. Witherspoon.”¹

The members of the first committee were Mr. Roberdeau, Mr. L. Morris, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Whipple, and Mr. Lovell,²—names that suggest little as yet, though by winter we shall find Mr. Lovell writing things which, it may be hoped, he was soon sorry for. With this committee Greene passed two evenings in full and free discussion. One of the subjects he felt most interest in was the authority of councils of war, which, as the sequel shows, he did not hold in very high esteem, never calling them himself except when he had already made up his mind not to fight. But Washington, acting with that cautious consideration which his peculiar position required, had thus far held himself bound to follow their opinion even where it disagreed with his own. Is this the intention of Congress? was the question which Greene brought before the committee; and, on their recommendation, Congress

“*Resolved*, That General Washington be informed that it never was the intention of Congress that he should be bound by a majority of voice in a council of war, contrary to his own judgment.”³

¹ Journals of Congress, March 21, 1777. John Adams has a curious passage upon this subject in a letter to his wife. Letter CV. p. 206.

² Ibid., March 13.

³ Journals of Congress, March 24,

Before the next year was over, the battle of Monmouth, fought in opposition to the decision of a council of war, showed how wise and timely that resolution had been. In other respects, too, Greene appears to have had no reason to complain of his committee; nor, as far as resolues could go, of anything in Congress itself but its useless delays. But Congress was, unhappily, far more skilled in framing resolutions than in carrying them into execution, and this it was that tried so sorely men like Washington and Greene, full of energy and action. How Greene sped in all these matters, and what else he did, he tells Washington in a long letter written just before his return: —

“I received your letter of the 21st. I was with a committee of Congress, who had the business of the cartel and other matters under consideration, when your Excellency’s letter was delivered me. I had explained the matter fully to the Congress and committee. I was two hours before the former, and two evenings with the latter. I believe the business of the cartel will be settled agreeable to your wishes, that is, General Howe acknowledging General Lee a prisoner of war, and holding him subject to exchange whenever we have an equivalent to offer,—the full execution of the old cartel to take place as your Excellency and General Howe can agree, with full powers to annex such further conditions as may be thought necessary to promote the comfort and happiness of the unfortunate. I explained fully the state of the army to the Congress; but I fear they can do but little more than has been done. There has gone from the city about seven

hundred men within the week past, a thousand more will be ready in eight or ten days. The Congress have wrote to Governor Johnson to forward the Maryland troops, and to the Governor of the three lower counties. The Maryland delegates which arrived in town last night say their regiments are above half full, upon an average. It is reported, with some degree of confidence, that the new North Carolina regiments are on their march this side of Virginia, but I have no sufficient foundation for the report to give full credit to it.

“ I believe Congress thinks the alteration of the route of the Massachusetts troops exceedingly judicious. I explained to the House your Excellency’s ideas of the next campaign. It appeared to be new to them; however, they readily admitted the probability from the reasons afforded. I yesterday went to view the forts and fortifications below the city. I think them quite insufficient for the purpose, without a very strong opposition. I have rode round the city and up the Schuylkill, and give it as my opinion, that it cannot be fortified to advantage. The approaches may be made so many ways, that it would take a greater number of troops to defend the works than it would be prudent to have shut up in the city. However, I think an advantageous line may be drawn from the Schuylkill to the Delaware, beginning at Morris’s *seat* on the Schuylkill, and running from thence to Shippen’s, Hubley’s, and Dickinson’s country seat over the Delaware. Those posts would be eligible upon the enemy’s getting possession of the city.

“ Enclosed is a return of the situation of the quartermaster-general’s department, the wagons, spare carriages, &c., not mentioned in the return, are in great forwardness, General Mifflin informs.

“ Colonel Flowers returned yesterday from Carlisle, the place for the laboratory. He has contracted for the

ground, provided materials, and ordered the necessary buildings to be erected as soon as possible. There is cast at this place one twelve-pound, two sixes, and two five-inch howitzers that are good. They will continue to cast about two a week. Colonel Flowers is making out a return of the state of his department; if he completes it before this letter goes, I shall enclose it.

“I am told by the Congress, the pay and establishment of the light-horse is completed and forwarded.

“I have impressed upon the Congress, in the strongest manner I was capable, the necessity of keeping the paymaster fully supplied with cash. The House requested estimates. I told them I could not furnish any; but the demand would be great, at the opening the campaign, to pay off the old arrearages and satisfy the new demands.

“There is so much deliberation and waste of time in the execution of business before this assembly, that my patience is almost exhausted. I cannot get the resolve respecting the cartel passed so soon as I want it. I know your delicate situation, and the anxiety you must be under.

“I think it is uncertain yet whether General Gates will serve as adjutant-general. I have directed General Fermoy to repair to camp. What measures the Congress will take respecting the rank of general officers appointed by the States I cannot pretend to say. The subject has been fully explained to them, and the injury that may arise from things continuing in their present situation.

“Colonel Cox is gone out of town. Whether he will accept the appointment of commissary of prisoners or not I cannot tell. I shall write him upon the subject.

“A brig arrived this day from Nantes. Her cargo consists of two hundred and seventy-two chests of arms, containing six thousand eight hundred muskets,—sixty

chests of which, not being proved, the captain says he cannot so fully engage for their goodness, but the remaining two hundred and twelve chests are very fine proved arms; also, fifteen hundred excellent double-bridled gun-locks. When this vessel left France there were great preparations in that kingdom and Spain for war, which was expected to be general throughout Europe.

“Another vessel has just passed up the river from Hispaniola, deep laden, her cargo unknown.

“Major Conner, by land from Charleston, South Carolina, advises of a ship belonging to that State arriving there eight days before he left that place with a number of arms, ammunition, &c., and twelve brass cannon from France.

“Nothing could have happened more seasonable than these arms, as the Congress have none in store. Colonel Flowers has about four thousand out of repair, and about four hundred that are fit for use. The Secret Committee have given me to understand that a large quantity of arms, ammunition, and brass cannon are daily expected.

“I shall stay to-day and to-morrow in town, and then set off for camp, unless I am detained by the Congress.”

This was the business side of the mission to Philadelphia. But there was also another side to this picture; for Philadelphia had recovered quickly from the fright of December, and was already gay and brilliant again. It was not merely staid Congressmen with grave faces that were seen in its straight and airy streets, but officers with epaulets and feathers, and buff facings and rattling swords, that kept time to their steps, and the step itself that vibrating, elastic tread which drum and

fife teach, and, once taught, is never forgotten. There were foreign officers too, mercurial Frenchmen, impassive Germans, and here and there a Pole, sprinkling every tavern and boarding-house table, standing in knots at the corners or on the side-walks, but oftenest found and thickest at the door of Independence Hall, watching to slip a memorial into the hand of some member of Congress, or to remind him of some hasty word which had been twisted into a promise. And in private houses there were sumptuous dinners served up in choice china, and now and then on plate, with rich wines in rare varieties,—such dinners as head-quarters never saw, though members who had a sure, social footing saw and ate them daily. And both at the afternoon board and in the evening dance there were bright young faces; and, writes Greene to his wife, they “appeared angelic.” “Attractive scene of debauch and amusement,” is Richard Henry Lee’s description of the Philadelphia of that winter. “Philadelphia, that mass of cowardice and Toryism,” writes John Adams. A place of “crucifying expenses,” wrote James Lovell, putting his finishing touch to the picture. To foreboding minds all this must have seemed a kind of madness, the frenzied revel of sailors on a sinking ship, and in this Philadelphia of March there were some, perhaps, whose hearts grew heavy with sad anticipations when they called to mind the Philadelphia of December, as it appeared to Wilkinson and Gates. “It was dark,” writes Wilkinson, “when we en-

tered Front Street, and it appeared as if we had penetrated a wilderness of houses ; such was the silence and stillness which prevailed, that the dropping of a stone would have been heard several squares, and the hoofs of our horses resounded in all directions.”¹

Greene loved society, and knew how to play the fool in the right place, as we shall see by and by, and see Washington join heartily in the frolic ; but this was neither the time nor the place, and doing as quickly as Congress would let him what he came to do, he gladly turned his face again towards the bleak hills of Morristown, revolving in his mind the checkered scenes he was leaving behind him, and, gathering strength as he crossed the Delaware to Trenton, and rode over the battle-field of Princeton, and holding his way along the road where a few weeks before he had tracked the march of his weary soldiers by blood-prints on the snow, he came out once more upon that mountain screen, behind which his beloved commander was thoughtfully preparing himself for another trial of strength and skill with his powerful adversary.

¹ Richard H. Lee to Washington, Sparks’s Correspondence of the Revolution, Vol. I. p. 367. J. Adams’s Letters. James Lovell to Washington, Correspondence of Revolution, *ut sup.*, 412. Wilkinson’s Memoirs, Vol. I. p. 127.

CHAPTER XVI.

Greene's return to Camp.—Birth of his Second Daughter.—Governor Livingston's Family.—Letter to Mrs. Greene.—Anxiety about Rhode Island.—Correspondence with Arnold.—Spring.—Army not yet raised.—Letter to J. Adams.—Doubts and Conjectures about the Enemy's Plans.—Attempt to surprise General Lincoln.—American Retaliation.—Plans, Positions, Reports, and Conjectures.—Greene sent with Knox to examine the Passes of the Hudson.—Reports and Letters to Washington.—Return to Morristown.—Letters to his Wife.

GREENE'S first feeling on returning to camp was a longing for home. "The great distance there is between us," he writes to his wife on the 30th, "and the few opportunities I have to hear from you, leaves me in a very disagreeable suspense. Eight long months have passed amidst fatigue and toil" (of the danger he does not speak) "since I have tasted the flowers of domestic felicity." And here "General Knox and a few others" come in and stop his pen. When they are gone, he adds, "I have been endeavoring to collect a few tender sentiments, and to call home my wandering thoughts; but" they "have put them all to the rout, and in vain do I endeavor to rally my ideas."

A few days afterwards he received the tidings of the birth of his second child,—a daughter.

“I read the letter,” he writes from Baskingridge, “with a trembling hand. Some superstitious fears had been hovering round me that something would happen to you. What gave rise to this troublesome train of visitants I cannot tell, unless it was the extreme anxiety I felt for you in your critical situation. Heaven be praised for this second pledge of conjugal affection! When I shall see the poor little [one] God only knows. I am exceedingly happy at your being at Potowomut, and rejoice to find the brothers so kind and attentive to your wants. How shall you or I repay their kindness? We must leave that to some after day. Nothing delights me more than to hear you all live in good-fellowship.

“I am now at Lord Stirling’s seat, in a most agreeable family of Governor Livingston’s. There are three young ladies of distinguished merit, sensible, polite, and easy. Their manners are soft and engaging; they wish much to see you here, and I wish it too; but I expect long before that happy moment to be upon the march towards Philadelphia. The enemy, I expect, will advance that way before ten days or a fortnight at most. If you have an inclination to come to the westward, bring somebody with you that can take care of you, as it is uncertain whether I shall have an opportunity to see you at all. I never wished more ardently to see you in my life than now; the hours grow tedious and the heart impatient. Fortune is rather unfriendly to afford but a few months’ enjoyment for several years’ marriage. However, I hope fortune has something better in store. If not, we must learn contentment. Pray is Nancy Vernon and the Doctor become one? I saw Doctor Young when I was in Philadelphia; his wife and Suse his daughter, Mrs. Washington and Mrs. Bland from Virginia, are at camp, happy with their better-halves. Mrs. Washington is extremely fond of the General, and he of her; they are very happy in each

other. General Knox informs me that he and his Lucy had agreed to visit you at Coventry. The morning was fixed to set out, but the orders of the General pointed out a different route."

Another cause of anxiety was, at this moment, recalling his thoughts to Rhode Island. The presence of the enemy on the island had excited at first a general alarm, which was presently followed by a resolution to attack them. Various plans were proposed, and many letters passed between Washington and the officers in immediate command in the State,—Spencer and Arnold. Greene, too, had drawn up a plan, which he forwarded to Arnold; but all were agreed that, unless a good and trustworthy force could be raised, any attempt, no matter on what plan, would be highly imprudent.¹ No such force could be raised; and yet Arnold writes to Greene from Providence on the 10th of March:—

"The wise Assembly of this State have passed a vote, declaring it disgraceful to the States of New England, and to this State in particular, and of course to the general officers of the army, that the enemy on Rhode Island have remained so long unmolested, and have requested and directed General Spencer to attack them immediately, as he would avoid the anathemas of the Great and General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island; which, being fearful of incurring, he has, in conjunction with General Cooke, given orders for collecting the militia, &c. for the above

¹ See Sparks's Correspondence of Sparks's Washington, Vol. IV. pp. the Revolution, Vol. I. pp. 334, 353. 312, 344.

purpose. Included is a copy of votes of the Assembly. I send it to you as a curiosity."¹

"I am favored with yours of the 10th," writes Greene from Morristown, March 30th, in reply, "covering several resolutions of the Assembly of the State of Rhode Island. I fear those were hasty measures,— the product of disappointment and vexation, taken without adverting to consequences. I am very sure their hearts are right, and their zeal warm, but I fear they do not give themselves time to deliberate properly. I am sure the House of Assembly never meant the resolutions as a reflection upon the general officers; neither did they think their neighboring States might take umbrage at the severity of the reproach. The State of Rhode Island may think it a great misfortune that the troops on Rhode Island have not been attacked; but I am far from thinking so, and ever shall be, unless I can be first convinced of the certainty of the success of the attack. People that are unacquainted with military matters and the force of discipline think that number are sufficient to secure success; four thousand troops, well posted, with a good train of artillery, may bid defiance to three times their numbers, especially when there is but little order and method and discipline among the assailants. I wish General Spencer may not hazard an attack with such troops as you describe; it is the opinion of the best military judges we have in the army, that the chance of an attack is against us. It signifies nothing for a few spirited officers to rush upon danger, when they have little or no hope of being well supported. Spirit is essential in an officer, but prudence is more so. If you make the attack, God grant you success! but I hope General Spencer will have more prudence than to run any unnecessary risk to gratify popular clamor.

¹ For votes of Assembly, see Bartlett's Rhode Island Records, Vol. VIII. pp. 154, 155. Arnold's Letters. Greene's MSS. Letters to General Greene, Skipwith Collection, p. 14.

“I am exceeding sorry to hear that the New England States are so tardy in furnishing their proportion of men; the Northern States are little better. This army wants a large re-enforcement to open the campaign to advantage; fortune favors us with a very seasonable supply of arms. I hear there is twelve thousand stand arrived to the eastward at Portsmouth, and one thousand barrels of powder; there is also six thousand eight hundred stand of arms arrived at Philadelphia, and six hundred and sixty barrels of powder arrived in Maryland.

“Several valuable prizes have been brought into Baltimore within a few days past,—two of the enemy’s store-ships, loaded with provisions, bound for New York. General Gates goes again to Ticonderoga. It is uncertain who commands the north side of Hudson’s River, but I think it probable General Putnam will.”

It is almost startling to find Greene and Arnold writing each other so freely, and with such expressions of mutual respect. But at this very time, Washington, too, was writing of the future traitor: “Surely, a more active, a more spirited and sensible officer fills no department in your army.”¹ And such, indeed, was the general feeling of the army, fully shared by Greene, who, as they were very seldom stationed together, had but little personal intercourse with him, yet continued to believe in him, and write to him till almost the very day of his fall.

Spring is come. Washington has worked hard all through the winter, with voice and pen. Greene has worked hard, too, sharing all his cares

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. IV. p. 351.

and counsels. A new campaign is at hand, but the work of preparation is not yet done; and while they are watching the enemy, holding themselves in readiness to seize an advantage or repulse an attack, they must still wait upon the steps of a dilatory Congress and State governments, too much absorbed with the care of their individual safety to provide seasonably for the safety of the whole.

“I am more and more alarmed every day of my life,” Greene writes to John Adams, on the 5th of April, “at the local preparations making in the different States for their own defence, in such a situation as we are in, surrounded with imaginary and real grievances,—claims made by one State, and refused by another. Men at the head of affairs full of caprice and humors, poisoned with little prejudices, and conceited of their own importance, can easily throw the whole empire into a convulsion, unless there is some seasonable check provided to silence those little differences in their infancy. Human nature is capable of those ebullitions of folly, and prudence dictates the necessity of providing against them. It is my opinion, there ought not to be any standing troops but what are on the Continental establishment.”

It was late for beginning a principal laboratory, but the work was still delayed for want of the necessary orders.

“I have neither seen nor heard any resolution of Congress,” he writes in the same letter, “approving or disapproving of the Laboratory being fixed at Springfield. If the Congress approves thereof it will be necessary for them to say so, there being now an order for its being

fixed at Brookfield, and the council of the Massachusetts State commissioned to provide the materials for the erection of the necessary buildings at that place. Please to inquire into the matter, and write General Knox upon the subject; it will forward the business, if the council has the same powers with respect to providing materials, only at Springfield instead of Brookfield."

The new army ought to have been in camp; armed, equipped, and well advanced in its drill. But the new levies not only came in slowly, but were in part composed of the worst materials for a patriot army; "convict servants," whom the recruiting officers, with a disgraceful neglect of duty, had purchased of their masters.¹

Meanwhile, "What will the enemy do?" was the first question on every tongue, the uppermost thought in every mind.

"Since my return to camp," writes Greene, in the same letter from which I have already quoted, "I am more at a loss to guess the enemy's intentions than ever. They are fortifying Brunswick. Two spies who left that place a few days since say the greater part of the troops are gone to Staten Island; drafts have been made from the several corps. There is a general order of General Howe's commanding all the officers that are absent from posts to join the 10th of this instant. It is generally suggested some expedition is on foot. If 't is up the North River, General Howe is the greatest blunderer of the age to put us on our guard by such an ill-timed expedition as they made the other day. If this expedition is to the southward, his delay has lost him the happy moment; a

¹ Gordon's American Revolution, Vol. II. p. 467.

fortnight's delay longer will put it out of his power to do any great things. If the States furnish their men, and we have a good train of artillery provided seasonably, and General Howe don't shut himself up in some inaccessible post, ten to one but ruin awaits him before fall. But if every State is at liberty to furnish only a part of their men, and those at their pleasure, we shall have another crippled campaign, indecisive and perhaps disgraceful."

A few days later a little light broke suddenly in upon the scene.

"The enemy made an attempt to surprise General Lincoln this morning," he writes to John Adams from Boundbrook on the 13th of April. "They advanced by three divisions; one crossed the Raritan, about a mile above head-quarters. The second division came in front of the town; the third to the left of the town, and crossed the river called Boundbrook. Besides these three divisions, there was a *corps de reserve* commanded by General Mathews. The patrols and guards posted by General Lincoln were negligent, or else the Tories, who are perfectly acquainted with the ground, brought the columns in between the patrols and guards; which of the two was the cause of the surprise, or whether they both concurred to produce it, I can't tell. The General had but just time to draw off the troops from between the heads of their two flank columns, which kept up a warm fire as our people passed between them. Our artillery, consisting of three three-pounders and the ammunition belonging to them, fell into the enemy's hands, and most of the men were made prisoners belonging to the artillery, and two of the officers. There was about twenty artillerymen made prisoners, and about forty battalion men killed, wounded, and missing. General Lincoln had one aide-

de-camp made prisoner, and lost almost all his papers. This is a great misfortune, as it will inform the enemy of many disagreeable circumstances. The enemy were supposed to be between four and five thousand strong at least. General Lincoln had about five hundred continental and militia troops. The action began about five o'clock. The enemy's loss must be considerable. Colonel Butler, with about three hundred excellent marksmen, had a good fire upon one of the heads of their columns for a considerable time. I am posted at Baskingridge, about twelve miles from this place. The enemy had evacuated the town before I got there. They held it about an hour. . . . This opportunity presented to write, and as it's uncertain whether the General's express will reach the city as soon as this gentleman, I thought proper to write to you."

When the circumstances became fully known, it was ascertained that no blame could attach to General Lincoln.

It "was owing to the valorous conduct of the militia," says Greene, in a letter of the 20th to a friend, "who were posted at a fording-place on the Raritan. They deserted their post without giving the General the least notice. . . . I marched from Baskingridge upon the first intelligence; but the distance was twelve miles, and the enemy had retreated before I got down." "The British Generals" (Cornwallis and Grant), he writes to his wife, "breakfasted, and I dined, at the same house the same day. This is the state of war."

The Americans were not disposed to put up with the insult.

"The next night," he continues, "we surprised one of their pickets, killed one officer and seven privates, and

took sixteen prisoners." They would gladly have done more. "I returned to this place last night," he writes to Lincoln from Morristown on the 19th. "Upon examining the condition of our posts and those of the enemy, from the intelligence of the enemy's strength and situation, and the weak state our advance posts were in, I find it impossible to make an attack upon the enemy with any probability of success. General Maxwell and General Stevens are of the same opinion. The latter wrote to General Washington this morning, that he had intelligence of the enemy's making some new disposition. 'The regiment of Guards are ordered up from the landing to Bonumtown, when the enemy will have their principal force assembled thereabouts, viz. the thirty-third, second battalion of the seventy-first light infantry from Rhode Island, and the forty-second, and I believe the grenadiers, who came from Rhode Island.' This is an extract from General Stevens's letter, who is of opinion that there will not be left above one thousand six hundred men at Brunswick and the landing. How well this opinion is founded I leave you to judge. General Stevens's opinion is, the enemy have some stroke in contemplation. His Excellency wishes you to keep a good lookout. He thinks the cannon with you are in a dangerous situation, and will in a great degree be useless, if the enemy make an attempt to surprise you. He therefore wishes you to send them to Morristown immediately, and only consider Boundbrook as an advanced picket. The General thinks you had better order all the stores back between the first and second mountain, and draw your daily supplies from thence."

How little do we realize the constant self-control which their situation imposed upon these bold and enterprising men !

"Pray, how goes on recruiting with you?" Greene writes to a friend the next day. "I am sure the continent must come to drafting at last; the sooner the better. Our strength now is trifling. It is to be regretted that the cause of freedom rests upon the shoulders of so few. General Howe is preparing with all imaginable diligence to take the field. His bridge across the Delaware, so much talked of, is arrived at Brunswick, as I am informed by a spy who left that place last night. I would thank the British myrmidons to protract the opening of the campaign for about three weeks; but that is not to be expected. Our army will appear like Gideon and his pitchers. God grant us the same success! The cause is equally righteous, and claims his heavenly protection."

There is one other source of hope to which he still continues to look, though almost a year was yet to pass before he saw it realized. "Very late news from Europe mentions that a French and Spanish war is inevitable, and that but few recruits can be got for the reinforcement of the British army in America."

Thus all through April the anxiety and watchfulness and preparation continue.

"I am directed by his Excellency General Washington," he writes to General Lincoln from Baskingridge, on the 27th, "to acquaint you the tents are arrived from Philadelphia, and that he purposes encamping the troops in a few days. His Excellency desires you to give the necessary orders for each regiment, to send the quartermaster or some other proper officer to draw the necessary tents for the respective regiments; one tent for five men. His Excellency also desires you to give it out in orders,

that no parties go out of the lines except such as are authorized by the daily orders, unless the officer has permission. General Maxwell had a party of about twenty surprised a few nights past, that went out of their own accord without the necessary directions. I purpose to call and see you this afternoon or to-morrow. Enclosed you have a piece of intelligence from Brunswick yesterday. I had intelligence from New York night before last. The intelligence gives an account of the enemy's being in great preparation, cutting down a large ship to make a floating battery. Eleven sail of transports with troops have gone up the North River; as many with troops are gone down the Eastern Sound, said to be bound for New Haven. These movements are to divert our attention from their principal object, and to keep the Eastern troops from coming on. The bridge at New York is complete, and part of it is said to be at Brunswick."

To increase the perplexity of the American commanders, a report came from Europe that Boston was to be attacked.

"I observe by Dr. Lee's letter to his brother,"¹ Greene writes to John Adams on the 2d of May, "that Burgoyne is to attack Boston. The troops remaining so long at Newport seems to favor this opinion,—time only can unfold their future intentions. I observe, by some late resolves of Congress, they are in fear for Ticonderoga. If Carleton comes over the lakes with a view of penetrating into the country, General Howe must be bound up the North River, notwithstanding all his threats and preparations for Philadelphia."

With his fleet so near at hand, it was not difficult for Sir William Howe to embarrass and per-

¹ Sparks's Washington, Vol. IV. p. 395.

plex his adversaries. There were so many points to attack, and each point offered so many inducements, that it seemed almost impossible to divine in what direction he would turn. His first measures served only to increase the perplexity. Towards the end of March he sent a detachment up the Hudson, and destroyed the stores at Peekskill. Towards the end of April he sent another detachment into Connecticut, and destroyed the stores at Danbury. "For once, give them credit for a bold manœuvre," Greene writes to John Adams. "I think they have paid dear for the attempt. It is supposed their loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners cannot be less than six hundred."

But whatever Howe's plans might be, the passes of the Hudson were the key to direct communication between the Eastern and Western States. Firmly held, the British forces north of the Highlands would still be deprived of the means of communicating with the army at New York. Once lost, the line of the Hudson was lost, and the Eastern States would be severed from the Middle States. Early in the preceding campaign Washington had given as much of his attention to these passes as his time and means permitted. He was even more anxious about them now, and, unable to go and examine them himself, he sent Greene to examine them for him, and "give such orders for further defence as" might "appear to" him "necessary for the greater security of the passes by land and water through the Highlands," disposing, "more-

over, of the troops in such a manner as" he might "judge most likely to answer the end in view."¹

Greene had never been through the Highlands before, and, could he have thrown aside his grave responsibilities for a while, he could hardly have chosen a better time for a first view of them. Never till then had his eyes rested on such huge masses, or wandered over such an expanse of foliage, fresh with the new life of early spring, or seen the Hudson itself — although he had passed weeks on its banks — flow with such majestic tranquillity, with every passing cloud, and every impending cliff, and the blended leaves of the forest, reflected in its burnished mirror, and looking up, as it were, from the mysterious depth of waters into the mysterious depth of overarching sky. But he had no time to think of the grandeur or beauty of the scene. It was for their strength that he looked with such searching eyes upon pass and defile; it was to choose the most inaccessible points that he climbed the highest mountains, and studied the projections and indentations of the tortuous river. The genial Knox was with him; and, as they rode along, they talked of cannon and mortar; measured with their eyes the range from each cliff, and from bank to bank; and sometimes, too, spoke of their great cause, their hopes and their fears for the opening campaign, their faith in Washington, and more than once of what they dreaded

¹Sparks's Washington, Vol. IV. p. 414. Instructions to General Greene, Morristown, May 12, 1777.

from the delays and stumblings of Congress. At Peekskill they found McDougall, Wayne, and George Clinton ; and after a careful comparison of observations, Greene drew up a report which they all signed together.

“ We have examined the obstructions in the North River, and beg leave to observe that the object is too important to be trusted to its present security. If those obstructions in the river can be rendered effectual, and the passes into the Highlands be properly guarded, which can be done with about four or five thousand troops, the rest of the army will be at liberty to operate elsewhere.

“ To render the obstruction at Fort Montgomery complete, it will be necessary to have a boom across the river, and one or two cables in front of the chain, to break the force of the shipping before they come up to it. The two Continental ships should be immediately manned and fixed, and the two row-galleys be stationed just above the obstruction, which will form a front fire equal to what the enemy can bring against them. The fire from the ships and galleys in front, and the batteries upon the flank, will render it impossible for the shipping to operate there if the obstructions in the river bring them up, which, with the additional strength proposed, we have great reason to expect.

“ The communication between the Eastern and Western States is essential to the continent ; and the advantages we shall have over the enemy by the communication, and the great expense that will be saved in transportation of stores, by having the command of the river, warrant every expense to secure an object of so great magnitude. We are very confident, if the obstructions in the river can be rendered effectual, the enemy will not attempt to operate

by land, the passes through the Highlands are so exceeding difficult."

By the same courier Greene gives Washington an account of his mission thus far:—

" Agreeable to your Excellency's instructions, I have given the necessary orders to carry the further obstructions on the river into execution. I am going this day up to New Windsor to view the obstructions there, and the passes through the Highlands to the Clove, after which I shall be able to give your Excellency a very good history of the state of things here, which I shall do at my return. It will be impossible to be at home under two days."

New Windsor was an important village then, very unlike the single street of dilapidated houses that stands crumbling now on the western bank of the Hudson; and almost within the shadow of the Storm King.¹ Bear with me, reader, if, as I write this name, I pause to recall him who gave it,—him whose quick poetic eye reading at a glance what thousands had looked upon the deep serenity of the majestic mountain and never seen,—its prophetic communings with sun and cloud, its unfailing promise of a perfect day and its sure foreshadowings of storm, and, reading these, gave it the lordly name which must cling to it forever. Bear with me if, mingling my own personal recollections with these recollections of a past which belongs to the world's history, I recall the Idlewild which sleeps under the Storm King's shadow, and to which genius

¹ A mountain at the northern opening of the Highlands, called Butter Hill on the map.

and geniality have given a charm that can never fade from my memory. It is only they who have known thee there, dear Willis, who have known in full the depth of thy mind or the tenderness of thy heart.

At the farthest end of the village, on a pleasant bank that, shaded with fruit-trees, slopes swiftly down to the river's edge, stood, a few years back, a modest little cottage, known to all the country round as the head-quarters of Washington. But it is gone now, torn down though not replaced. Here, as in the best house, Greene must have passed his first night in the hamlet where, before the war was over, he was to pass so many ; and here on the 18th he wrote to Colonel Hughes of the Quarter-master's department :—

“ His Excellency General Washington sent me and General Knox to this division of the army to examine the forts, fortifications, and obstructions across the river ; also the state of the provision at each post, and the condition of the Quartermaster-General's department in this division of the army.

“ I am sorry to find a general complaint at all the posts of want of forage. You must be sensible by this, that a considerable part of the Continental forces are drawn together at Peekskill and its environs. You also must be sensible that no operation can take place, if the motions of the enemy render it ever so necessary, without the article of forage.

“ The season is fast approaching when we may expect the enemy will be in motion, and to be unprepared to counteract them for want of forage will be a great misfortune. I am told by some of your deputies, that the evil

originates through the neglect of the agents of Mr. Duer ; if that is the case, you must not trust to them for a supply any longer. Receive all that they send in, but immediately take such measures to establish proper magazines as will afford a sufficient supply to all parts of the army. If the inhabitants will not supply it voluntarily, you must apply to the commanding officer at Peekskill for a proper guard to take it, paying or giving certificates for everything so taken.

“ Wagons and horses to transport the regimental baggage, artillery horses, and covered wagons for military stores, should be provided as soon as possible. Your utmost exertions will be necessary to provide these things seasonably. Let the provisions be got over the North River agreeably to the resolve of Congress and order of General Washington, and lodged at such places as General George Clinton shall direct.

“ I must entreat you to use all possible diligence to get everything in your department in the greatest forwardness. Your own industry is unexceptionable, but you will please to have an eye to those that are under you, as few are faithful enough to discharge their duty without such attention.”

By the 19th he was again at Morristown.

“ I returned last night from Peekskill,” he writes to his wife the next day, “ after a long, tedious, and hard journey. To crown all, I fell from my horse upon the top of an exceeding high mountain, cut my lip through, and otherwise bruised myself exceedingly. Never did I undergo so much fatigue in less time. Last night at Mr. Lott’s, within about nine miles of this place, I heard you was gone on before me. O how my heart leaped for joy, notwithstanding I was sure it was impossible ! yet the thought was so pleasing I could not help indulging the sweet delusion.”

It is pleasant to get the glimpse of the inner man which these letters give when his thoughts turn homeward.

“ I impatiently waited for the post to-day, in hopes of a letter, but, to my great mortification, not a line,” he writes in one. “ I had the pleasure to hear from you to-day by letters from Brother Kitt and Sister Caty,” begins another.

“ They write you are cleverly, and in a way of getting well soon. God grant you may ! The child, also, they say is in a fair way. Heaven be praised for its goodness ! I most ardently wish to see you, but when or where [I shall] the Lord alone knows. I don’t expect to visit Rhode Island till the close of this campaign, if fortune should preserve me through it.”

Then day after day passes without bringing letters from home, although he writes “by every post and every private opportunity.”

“ My dear, it is now a month and upward since I received a line from one of the family. I think it exceeding unkind ; if you are unwell, and incapable of writing, surely some of the brothers might do me that friendly office. However disagreeable consequences may be, it is some consolation to know them. Nothing is more painful than a state of suspense. Pray, my dear, let me know the worst, that I may accommodate my mind to the evil. The last accounts I had from you, you was exceeding unwell, taking four grains of mercury every day. Think how you would feel if I had been in an engagement, and left your mind under the torture of suspense for upwards of a month. O how cruel !”

She had been very ill.

“I was almost thunderstruck at the receipt of your letter. How different its contents from my wishes! A lingering disorder of five weeks’ continuance, and from the present symptoms a confinement of two months longer. Heaven preserve you, and bless you with patience and fortitude to support yourself under the cruel misfortune! Long had I pleased myself with the [hope] of a happy meeting. But fortune seems to delight to sport with human happiness. . . . O that I had but wings to fly to your relief!”

And when better tidings of her health came, other trials followed close upon the trial of protracted illness, threatening to keep them still apart.

“My dear angel,” he writes, “since I wrote you this morning I received your letter of the 29th of April. The contents have wrung drops of blood from my heart. Gracious God, how much I wish to come to you! But the General will not permit me to go. I have had exceedingly hard duty this spring. The General keeps me constantly upon the go. The love and friendship he has for me, and the respect and kindness he shows me, goes a great way to alleviate my pains. I am as well loved and respected in the army as I can wish; but notwithstanding the honors of war, and the love and respect of men, I feel a blank in my heart which nothing but your presence can fill up. There is not a day or night, nay, not an hour, but I wish to fold you to my heart.”

Of his own health he seldom writes. Once indeed he says:—

“I have a slight disorder that has been hanging about me for several days past. I hope its duration will be short, as I have neither time nor inclination to be absent

from duty." But of hers he is constantly thinking. " You must threaten the doctors, if they don't cure you in a few days, with instant destruction. If Doctor Joslin attends you, let him know if he don't make a radical cure in a fortnight, he shall have more holes in his hide to fill with tow wads."

And what a host of associations these letters home and from home awaken! How do familiar scenes and familiar faces come crowding upon the mind, looking you right in the face, as it were, and knocking at the heart's door as though it were the door of your chamber! " How is my son?" says another letter. " How are my friends? Where is Nancy Vernon? Is the Doctor and she like to form a connection?" This Nancy Vernon was a very lovely Newport beauty, and the Doctor, Doctor Senter, an eminent physician who had made the march to Quebec with Arnold's detachment, keeping a journal of its incidents which, though brief, is full of valuable information.¹ " I think not. Pray inform me. How is Brother Bill? Where is Elihu? My best respects to him and his wife. Pray, is there harmony amongst you? Where are Griffin and his wife? Not a word have I heard from him since he left camp. Out of sight out of mind."

He hardly knows how to decide about her coming on to join him.

" I most ardently wish to see you; but the great distance between us, the poor accommodations on the roads, the uncertainty of the motions of the enemy, and the

¹ Published by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 1846.

weak state of your health, are obstacles that prevent my pressing you to come, agreeable to my wishes. Prudence restrains what my heart most inclined to. I cannot express the recent pleasure I felt at hearing you was come, although I knew it must be false, yet so strong were my wishes that reason was obliged to give place to my deluded hopes."

Of course, the heart conquers; and in another letter of the same day he writes that he hopes she is well enough to set out to join him, and then goes on to tell her what arrangements he had made to facilitate her preparations, and secure her comfort while he was with the army.

"If you think your health and strength will endure the journey, my heart will leap for joy to meet you. If you are in want of any clothes, write to Mrs. Knox, she will get you whatever you want; the General has wrote to her for that purpose, and I am to pay the General here.

"Mr. Lott's family have engaged you to spend the summer there. It is about nine miles from this place, and about twenty-two or three miles from the place where we are going to encamp. They are one of the finest families you ever saw. The old gentleman and his lady are as merry as boys of fourteen; there are four or five fine young ladies of delicate sentiments and polite education. They are all anxious to see you and cultivate your acquaintance. They long to see you, and impatiently wait your coming. Heaven grant it may be speedy! Mr. Hoffman and the ladies of this place wish to see you, as do Lady Stirling and Lady Kitty, one of the finest young ladies I ever saw. But Mr. Lott claims the preference to your society. His son-in-law, Mr. Livingston, was one of my aide-de-camps last year, which introduced

me into the family. You may learn music and French, too, there. Adieu, my second self."

He is very anxious that his wife should appear to advantage among the friends whose opportunities of early education had so far exceeded hers.

"Remember when you write to Mrs. Knox you write to a good scholar, therefore mind and spell well; you are defective in this matter, my love; a little attention will soon correct it. Bad writing is nothing, if the spelling is but good. People are often laughed at for not spelling well, but never for not writing well. It is said it is ungenteel for gentlemen to make observations upon ladies' writing. I hope you won't think it unkind in me. Nothing but the affection and regard I feel for you makes me wish to have you appear an accomplished lady in every point of view."

And mingled with all these expressions of tenderness is the great anxiety of the hour. "How goes on the inoculation?" follows close upon "How is my son?" "How goes on recruiting?" is mixed up with fears for her health.

"I am happy to hear you have such a fine daughter. As to her name, I must beg to be excused from giving her any name. That falls more immediately under your province. Mrs. Washington's Christian name is Martha. I shall have no objection to that or any other name you think proper to give her."

Martha Washington was the name chosen for this eldest daughter, as George Washington had been the name of the eldest son. But in the next paragraph the husband and father becomes again the patriot and general.

“ Before this reaches you, the account of the loss of the stores at Danbury will come to hand. Our loss is considerable in stores, the enemy’s in men. This was a bold manœuvre, and does the enemy great credit, notwithstanding it is at our expense. It is supposed the enemy’s loss amounted to upwards of six hundred men killed, wounded, and taken prisoners. Had not General Wooster been wounded, ten to one the whole party had been cut off. Before he was wounded, the enemy broke, and ran like fury ; but after he was wounded, there was nobody to lead the troops on, which gave the enemy time to rally again.

“ By some late accounts from England, we learn that Boston is to be attacked. The troops continuing so long at Rhode Island seems to favor that opinion. General Howe still threatens Philadelphia ; if he attempts it, it will be a bloody march. It is said Carleton is crossing the Lakes ; if that be true, General Howe must be bound up the North River, notwithstanding all his parade for the southward.”

A letter begins with :—

“ I waited impatiently for the post to-day ; but, to my great mortification, not a line. Captain Flagg (who arrived here a day or two past with the Rhode Island detachment) informed me he left you unwell with a fever.” Expressions of anxiety, and of his longing “ to hear from you, but much more to see you,” follow, but then the great care breaks out. “ By intelligence from New York and Brunswick yesterday, we learn the enemy are to take the field the first of June. Their delay is unaccountable already. What has kept them in their quarters we can’t imagine. We have got together a small force, although by no means equal to our expectations. The small-pox has proved a great hindrance to the troops coming in.

However, if General Howe attempts to pass through the Jerseys, we determine to play fury with him. There is little or no reinforcement expected from England. O that the Americans were but spirited and resolute, how easy the attempt to rout those miscreants! but their foolish delays and internal disputes, I fear, will protract the war to a much greater length than is necessary to complete the work. I am sure America will be victorious finally, but her sufferings for want of union and public spirit may be great first. There is no people on earth that ever had so fair an opportunity to establish their freedom at so easy a rate, if the opportunity had been properly improved. God grant a happy issue to the war!"

And directly after the admonition to take heed to her spelling in her letters to Mrs. Knox comes:—

"The enemy remains at Brunswick in a frighted condition. Our army are camping near Boundbrook. Nothing material has happened since I left this place. By some late arrivals from France a fresh supply of arms and clothing is received, and it is said the British Ministry are not likely to get any reinforcements from Germany. If so, poor General Howe is still at an humble distance from the great and important business of conquering America. My hand trembles so prodigiously that I can scarcely write. Tell your brother Bill to bring on the bald horse, if he is in good order."

CHAPTER XVII.

Scanty Numbers of the New Army.—Greene's Division.—Weedon.—Muhlenberg.—Exchanges a Regiment with Sullivan.—New Aid.—Washington's Position.—Howe's Plan.—Lee's Treason.—Conjectures and Perplexity of the Americans.—Preparations for the Campaign.—Howe's Manceuvres.—Americans Advance on Brunswick.—Howe foiled.—Disasters in the North.—Greene expects to be sent North.—Washington unwilling to part with him.—Veil partly lifted.—March to the Delaware.

THE army for the new campaign consisted of five divisions, each division containing two brigades; and the whole forming forty-three regiments of eight thousand three hundred and seventy-eight men, inclusive of the artillery and cavalry. The cavalry amounted to only one hundred and eighty men, not even enough for vedettes and patrols; and of this small army "upwards of two thousand were sick, and five thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight rank and file" were all that could be counted upon for active service.¹ Even of those five thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight, half were raw recruits, ignorant of "the first rudiments of military duty," and who "had never looked an enemy in the face." The two brigades of

¹ There is a discrepancy between the statements of Gordon and Marshall, although both wrote from official returns. I have followed Mar-

shall, Vol. I. p. 145. Gordon puts the number at 7,271, inclusive of cavalry and artillery, Vol. II. p. 469.

Greene's division were commanded by Weedon, a Virginian, with whom he formed a warm friendship and continued to correspond during the rest of his life ; and Peter Muhlenberg, the Lutheran parson, who, telling his parishioners " that, in the language of Holy Writ, there was a time for all things,—a time to preach and a time to pray,— but that those times had passed away and there was a time to fight, and that time was now come," had stripped off the preacher's gown which concealed the soldier's uniform, and, descending the pulpit, ordered the drum to beat at the church door to raise recruits for the regiment he was going to lead to the army.¹ One of the regiments first assigned to Greene was Hazen's, which, at Sullivan's request, he exchanged with him for the German regiment commanded by Baron Arendt.

" Your Excellency's favor of yesterday this moment came to hand," he writes to Washington from Boundbrook on the 24th of May. " I am perfectly satisfied with the exchange of Hazen's regiment for the Baron Arendt's. I am by no means attached to any particular regiment. Nearly an equal distribution of the forces will be entirely satisfactory to me. I only wish to stand upon an equal footing with the other officers ; then, if I don't execute my duty as well, I am willing to be subject to censure.

" General Sullivan's reasons for the exchange are very substantial, and perfectly satisfactory. I ever wish to make the good of the service my principal object. When I deviate from that line I wish to be corrected."

In his military family, also, a change had been

¹ Life of Muhlenberg, by his grandson, Henry A. Muhlenberg, p. 53.

made. Major Clarke, whom he had been brought into such pleasant relations with at Fort Lee, having taken the place of Major Livingston as his aid. The merry, restless, witty Blodget was still his other aid. His quarters, as the dates of his letters show, were part of the time at Boundbrook and part of the time at Middlebrook.

Whatever the British general's plan might be, Washington had chosen his position well for speedily detecting them, and counteracting them as far as his means would permit. Brunswick, where the British army still lay, was within ten miles of his camp; and from the high ground in front of it he could look down upon the whole field of the enemy's operations, tracing the course of the Raritan to its mouth, and following the road to Philadelphia deep into southern Jersey. A ridge of strong and commanding heights, connected by nature and strengthened by art, covered his encampment in front; while the road northward for a junction with the forces at Peekskill, and the road southward for gathering in his right wing and coming out upon the enemy's flank or rear, lay equally within his reach. Thus, whichever way the British general turned,—whether against the Highland passes, as some circumstances seemed to indicate, or towards Philadelphia, as seemed equally evident from others,—he was sure either to find his watchful adversary in his path or feel him at some vulnerable point.

Well might the American generals be doubtful about the designs of Sir William Howe, for they

were no less a mystery to officers of high rank in his own army. Warned by Trenton and Princeton, he had drawn in his scattered forces, abandoned his conquests of December, and narrowed down his occupation of the Jerseys to Brunswick and Amboy,—posts well chosen for preserving his communications with New York, and keeping up the appearance of a design upon Philadelphia. In these narrow quarters his troops had suffered all through the winter from hard service and cold weather; their pickets were often surprised, their foraging-parties assailed, their outposts cut off.¹ But in March, says the Newport Gazette, speaking the wishes of the Tories, they “were in the highest health and spirits, longing only for the opening of the campaign to assert the injured rights of their king and country. They are well supplied with clothing and every necessary.”² They had, moreover, the consolation to learn from the same authentic chronicler, that, while they were thus reveling in abundance, the rebels at Morristown were paying fifteen pence a pound for beef, forty-five for butter, eight shillings apiece for geese and turkeys, and that “their salt was almost expended.” How must loyal hearts have rejoiced!

Meanwhile, Sir William Howe had formed, with the approbation of the ministry, a plan for severing the Eastern States from the Middle States,

¹ Stedman's History of the American War, Vol. I. p. 276, and passages already quoted from Greene's Letters. Also, Letters to a Noble-

man on the Conduct of the War in the Middle Colonies, p. 59.

² Newport Gazette, No. 11, March 27, 1777.

by combining the movements of the army of New York with those of the army of Canada. The plan had been discussed, the details matured, and preparations were busily making with great expectations of success on the part of all whom the Commander-in-chief had admitted to his confidence. And thus things went busily on till the beginning of April; nothing but the arrival of supplies and reinforcements from England being wanted to "open the door wide for the Canada army," and, striking "at the root of the rebellion, place those Independent Hypocrites between two fires."¹

April came, and all was changed; no more co-operation with the "Canada army," no more a triumphant march through the Jerseys; but in their stead an invasion of Pennsylvania by sea, and the conquest of Philadelphia by a march northward from Chesapeake Bay. Great was the astonishment of the English generals, and greater still their disgust, when the "great secret" became known. Not the least decided in his "reprobation" was Howe's unwelcome lieutenant of Bunker Hill and future successor at Philadelphia, Sir Henry Clinton. Cornwallis and Grant alone were admitted to the full confidence of their general, and they perhaps approved of his new decision.² At a later period in the war, when the disastrous consequences

¹ Moore's *Treason of Charles Lee*, p. 91. One of the most valuable monograms of our Revolutionary history, not only founded upon documents, but controlled by them.

² MSS. notes to Stedman's *History of the War*, attributed to Sir H. Clinton. This curious copy is in the library of John Carter Brown, Esq., of Providence.

of this ill-judged change became evident to all, Howe threw the responsibility on the ministers, and said that he had been compelled to change his plan because they had withheld the reinforcements which he had demanded as a condition of success.

But on the 29th of March General and Admiral Howe had received a letter from Charles Lee,—that British colonel and American general whose misfortunes Washington was even then lamenting in letters to Congress, and of whom Greene writes to Lincoln twenty-one days later, “General Lee’s servant and dog are sent down to the lines to be sent in to the General. You will please to give the necessary passport accordingly.” Well would it have been for Lee’s happiness then, and his good name with posterity, if he had humbled himself before that mute favorite, and learned from its pleading eyes and eloquent caresses the precious lesson of fidelity. For in that fatal letter,—never acknowledged by the Howes, lest they should be taunted with having failed through the suggestions of a traitor, never seen for eighty years by other eyes than theirs and the two or three whom they took into their counsels, but which, awakened at last from its almost centennial slumbers in their domestic archives, has been brought back to the very spot in which it was written, to bear witness, when every other witness had passed away, against the heart that conceived and the hand that wrote it,—in this letter, so fortunately preserved and so strangely discovered, it is written that, “to bring matters to

a conclusion, it is necessary to unhinge or dissolve, if I may so express myself, the whole system or machine of resistance, or, in other terms, Congress government. This system or machine, as affairs now stand, depends entirely on the circumstances and disposition of the people of Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. If the Province of Maryland, or the greater part of it, is reduced, or submits, and the people of Virginia are prevented or intimidated from marching aid to the Pennsylvania army, the whole machine is dissolved, and a period put to the war,—to accomplish which is the object of the scheme which I now take the liberty of offering to the consideration of his Lordship and the General; and if it is adopted in full, I am so confident of the success that I would stake my life on the issue." By this "scheme" fourteen thousand men were "to clear the Jerseys and take possession of Philadelphia," and "four thousand be immediately embarked in transports, one half of which should proceed up the Potomac and take post at Alexandria, the other half up Chesapeake Bay and possess themselves of Annapolis. . . . From these posts proclamations of pardon" were to be "issued to all those who come in at a given day; and I will answer for it with my life, that all the inhabitants of that great tract southward of the Patapsco, and lying betwixt the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay, and those on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, will immediately lay down their arms. But this is not all. I am much mistaken if those potent and

populous German districts, Frederick County in Maryland and York in Pennsylvania, do not follow their example"; and thus Congress cut off from its constituents, and Washington cut off from reinforcements, in "less than two months from the date of this proclamation, not a spark of this desolating war" would remain "unextinguished in any part of the continent."

How did the two brothers look when they saw the well-known handwriting of a former brother-in-arms, the damning record of the wilful treachery of a native of their own island? In all the common relations of life they were honorable men, and the suspicion of personal degradation was never raised against them. But now, while they instinctively shrank from the traitor, they found, as it seemed to them, a ray of light in his treason. They had learned that their expectation of supplies and reinforcements would not be fulfilled; that the ministry, while it approved their plans, either could not or would not give them the means of accomplishing them; that, for whatever they did, they must chiefly depend upon the resources which they had already at hand. They changed their plan, therefore, and, without adopting Lee's in full, accepted its suggestion of beginning their operations from the south. Sorely must the pride of the traitor have been tried as, watching the gradual development of their campaign, he recognized the traces of his own villainy, and saw in the caution with which his suggestions had been received the fatal

proof of the distrust and contempt which they had awakened.

To the Americans, of course, these things were unknown; nor is there any ground for supposing that Washington's and Greene's distrust of Lee's capricious temper ever extended to his fidelity. Meanwhile, as Greene revolved the possible plans of the enemy, he wrote to John Adams:—

“I cannot concur with you in sentiment because the enemy did not go to Philadelphia last December that they had no intention, then or since, of going there. I am of opinion, if the enemy could have got over the Delaware immediately after our army crossed it, it would have been agreeable to their wishes. Had they effected it before the junction of the forces under General Lee and General Gates, the consequences might have been disagreeable. The attempt was dangerous, the chain of communication from Brunswick being very extensive for the number of their troops to maintain; and yet I cannot think at that time they had much to fear either from Pennsylvania or New York.

“General Howe has lost the most favorable opportunity this spring of destroying us, perhaps, that he ever will have. Had he marched for Philadelphia as soon as the season opened, he might have performed it with less than one half the force necessary to accomplish it now. Such a stroke before the formation of our army might have given us a deadly wound by retarding our preparations for some months, increasing the Tory faction and depriving us of many valuable stores.”

As the season opened, every exertion was made to get the army well in hand, and prepare the men for an active campaign.

"I arrived at this place yesterday about noon," Greene writes to Washington from Boundbrook on the 24th of May, "and immediately issued the necessary orders for collecting the troops together from the outposts. I fear, without great exertions in the commissary's department, there will be a want of provisions. I shall endeavor to learn the design of the enemy's collection of wagons.

"We shall begin to lay off the encampment this morning. Colonel Biddle arrived too late last night to do anything more than to ride round the ground."

"I find a great want of tents in several brigades," he writes the ensuing day. "General Maxwell says he has none, neither has he had it in his power to get any. I shall endeavor to get a more particular state to-day, and shall notify your Excellency upon the subject.

"A small detachment of Colonel Lewis's regiment came in last evening without blankets or tents, and said there was none to be had at Philadelphia. If that be true, we shall be miserably off.

"Upon inquiry I find the camp fever begins to prevail among some of the troops. Nothing will correct this evil like the free use of vinegar. The men feed principally upon animal food, which produces a strong inclination to putrefaction. Vegetables, or any other kind of food, cannot be had in such plenty as to alter the state of the habit. Vinegar is the only sovereign remedy. Cost what it may, I would have it in such plenty as to allow the men a gill, if not a half-pint, each day.

"If cider vinegar cannot be had in such plenty as the state of the army requires, vinegar can be made with molasses, water, and a little flour to produce a fermentation. One hogshead of molasses and one barrel of rum will make ten hogsheads of vinegar. Vinegar can be made from the simple state of the materials fit for use in a fortnight's time.

“I think it, my dear General, an object of great importance to preserve the health of the troops. What can a sickly army do? They are a burden to themselves and the state that employs them. All the accumulated expense of raising and supporting an army is totally lost unless you can find means to preserve the health of the troops. No general, however active himself, or whatever may be his knowledge or experience in the art of war, can execute anything important while the hospitals are crowded with the sick. Besides, such a spectacle as we beheld last campaign is shocking to the feelings of humanity, distressing to the whole army to accommodate the sick; but, above all, the country is robbed of many useful inhabitants, and the army of many brave soldiers.

“Your own reputation, the protection of the country, and the success of the campaign, are dependent upon the health of the army. Objects so important in their consequences demand your Excellency’s serious attention.

“Enclosed is an account of the state of things in Brunswick yesterday. Colonel Brodhead’s picket was attacked yesterday. The enemy took one foot sentry and one vedette; the latter was lost by attempting too rashly to recover the foot soldier, which, however, was recovered, but wounded in a most shocking manner.

“The troops are encamping as fast as possible.”

The work of preparation continues; each day, or rather each hour, bringing some new difficulty to light. On the 27th he writes to Washington early, it would seem, in the morning, for the answer comes the same day:—

“This moment the commissary reports to me that the provisions and the supplies fall short; and that it is out of his power, with his utmost exertions, to procure a sufficient

supply. I wish your Excellency would order the commissary at Morristown down here as soon as possible to the assistance of this.

“ We must take sheep and cattle about the country to supply the deficiency.

“ I think Colonel Trumbull should pay immediate attention to this matter.

“ A deserter of the 71st this moment came in from Bonumtown. He says very little. He says it is the common talk in the British army they are going to Philadelphia by water, and that transports are prepared and preparing to go round to Philadelphia, and that the troops are all to embark.”

“ I have ordered the assistant commissary at this place to repair immediately to camp,” says Washington in reply. “ It is the peculiar misfortune of this army to have, generally speaking, the heads of the different departments always absent when they are most wanted. Two months was I laboring, as hard as a man could, to get the Commissary-General to this place, and had scarcely accomplished it before the Congress ordered him to Philadelphia; from whence I have used my utmost endeavors to bring him back, but am answered that he is detained by order. In the mean while, the army may starve. I will again send to him by express, and for present supplies advise the adoption of the mode you pointed out, by your taking the provision out of the country about Elizabethtown, Newark, and Millstone, because two ends will be answered by it.¹ I hope Colonel Dayton reported to you the suspicious person arrested at Bullion’s tavern, and that you have had him under examination before this.”

On the 28th of May Washington joined the army at Middlebrook.² And now began the manoeuvres

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. IV. ² Gordon, Vol. II. p. 469.
p. 437.

by which the British general endeavored to deceive his watchful adversary,—threatenings and shows of attack, relapsing suddenly into inactivity.

“The Philistines are upon thee, Samson; take care of thyself,” Greene writes on the 31st to Sullivan, who was posted on the right at a short distance from the main body. “The enemy are destroying their works at Amboy and reinforcing Brunswick. They threaten to attack us here; they are welcome, if they please. If they are bound to Philadelphia, I think they will endeavor to steal a march upon us, and either leave you to the right, or make an attack upon you, and give you a royal rout. I am going to view Millstone this afternoon, to establish a guard there of horse and foot. God bless you!”

Washington, meanwhile, was strengthening his position, already so strong by nature; for he was resolved to leave nothing to chance that forethought could make sure.

“His Excellency,” Greene writes to Lincoln on the 1st of June, “thinks it advisable to fortify with a small redoubt the passes through the mountains not stopped or hedged up.¹ The bigness of the redoubts should be proportioned to the strength of the picket. If it be made defensible against small arms, it will be sufficient, as no cannon can be brought to play against them. Such works will render the pass much more formidable and the picket quite secure. The very name will have its weight upon the minds of the enemy. It will take but little time or labor to construct such works. I purpose to fortify the gap at Steel’s Tavern, and I think a couple of small redoubts are necessary upon my right to secure that flank. I would have but two passes leading into the camp front

¹ See an important letter of Washington to Arnold. Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 463.

or rear. Should be glad of your opinion upon the subject. I am this morning going to Somerset to post a guard there. I shall be back again about noon. Should be glad to see you at my quarters. Please to come and dine with me and the young gentlemen of your family.

“Colonel Parker sent in a prisoner from Westfield last night. I think he is an American recruit. He gives much the same account about the enemy as you heard before.”

And again on the 9th:—

“Is there a guard posted at the cross-roads upon your left? I think our front is very secure, and our flanks tolerably well guarded; but a small guard seems necessary to me at the cross-roads on the left, and another to the right towards Pluckemin. The latter I shall pay particular attention to; to the former I trust you will.

“Pray, what can these gentry be about? I never was more perplexed to unravel and adjust the contradictory intelligence. I cannot think General Howe will attempt to garrison Brunswick and divide his force. To march by land to Philadelphia with a divided force is not a little dangerous; the militia may retard him more than he is aware of, and the Continental troops will complete his ruin. If he gives up the Jerseys, and goes altogether by water, it will be a strong proof of his weakness, and cannot fail to ruin their interest in the country. The people will be afraid to be connected with those who can only afford them a temporary and water security. I cannot fix a judgment satisfactory to myself, much less to anybody else.”

The first efforts of the British general were to draw Washington down from his strong position; and failing in this, he retraced his steps towards Amboy. On the night of the 21st Washington called a council of war in which it was determined to

advance upon Brunswick. Greene was immediately pushed forward with his own division, strengthened for the occasion by Wayne's brigade and Morgan's riflemen, with orders to fall upon the enemy's rear. Orders were sent to Sullivan and Maxwell to co-operate with Greene. In the advance was Morgan the wagoner, serving for the first time under the leader for whom, three years later, he was to win the decisive battle of the Cowpens. The road ran along the right bank of the Raritan, whose pleasant waters were studded with starlight when the march began, but were already glowing with the first beams of morning when the eager advance came out unexpected upon the first picket of the enemy. They were Hessians,¹ who perhaps recalled to mind Trenton, as they fled in wild disorder towards the town, hotly pursued by Morgan and his riflemen. In a few minutes the American advance and British rear stood face to face close to the bridge; and in a few moments more up came the remainder of the rifle corps, and Wayne with his whole brigade. A brisk charge cleared the town, and compelled the enemy to take refuge in their redoubts on the east bank of the river. But Morgan's blood was up, and Wayne was eager for a fight, and Greene was not the man to hold them back where impulse might almost supply the place of strength; and without waiting to see how much they were outnumbered, they pushed on over the bridge, and drove the enemy from their works.

¹ Almon's Remembrancer, Vol. V. p. 259.

Meanwhile, as day advanced, Washington drew out his whole army on the high grounds in front of his camp, watching anxiously Greene's movements, and looking eagerly for some sign that Sullivan and Maxwell were at their posts. But Sullivan had received his orders too late to get up in season; and Maxwell, by the desertion or capture of the express to whom they were confided, did not receive his at all. And thus the English general, harassed indeed, and with his rear-guard sorely pressed, but with his main body untouched, held on his way towards Amboy; marking his steps by a long line of smoke and flame from the burning houses and barns, which in happier days the wretched owners, little dreaming of the desolation that was to come upon them, had confidingly built by the wayside. The Americans continued the pursuit as far as Piscataway.

“General Greene desires me,” writes Washington to the President of Congress, “to make mention of the conduct and bravery of General Wayne and Colonel Morgan and of their officers and men upon this occasion, as they constantly advanced upon an enemy far superior to them in numbers, and well secured behind strong redoubts.”¹

And thus June slowly wore away in movements which, on the 2d of July, Washington briefly summed up in a letter to the President of Congress:—

“General Howe, as you have been informed, made a

¹ Sparks's Washington, Vol. IV. Graham, pp. 125, 126; an able work, p. 471. Gordon, Vol. II. pp. 471, founded upon a careful study of documents. Life of Morgan, by James

show of marching for the Delaware, but suddenly turned back to Brunswick, and from thence to Amboy. He came out again with his whole force a few days ago, with a seeming intention to make a general attack upon us; but after marching seven or eight miles parallel with the Sound, he returned again into Amboy, contenting himself with burning many houses and plundering all that fell in his way.”¹

And on the 2d of July, in a final recapitulation, he writes to Governor Trumbull from Middlebrook:—

“ Since my last, the enemy, disappointed in their attempt upon our right, have made an experiment upon our left, and, frustrated in that also, have now abandoned the Jerseys and encamped upon Staten Island. There is a great stir among their shipping, and in all probability their next movement will be by water; though it is impossible to decide with certainty to what place.”²

Howe had tried to conquer by numbers and discipline, and failed; he had tried manœuvres and strategy, and his failure was still more signal. What will he try next? was the chief question in the American camp,—the subject of many a long conference betwixt Washington and Greene, as they compared the reports of their spies and their own calculations of the various chances of war; but conferences into which success had infused a confidence, a buoyancy almost, of hope, which had never mingled with them before. Of this hope, one of the chief sources was the reawakening of popular enthusiasm; for no sooner had Howe begun to move

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. IV. p. 479.

² Ibid., p. 477.

than the militia began to rise on every side,— that same Jersey militia which, when the British army first came among them, had either skulked ignominiously away to avoid taking up arms on either side, or crowded still more ignominiously on the path of the invader, to ask protection at his hand.¹ The ravages and outrages of November and December had convinced the Jerseymen that there was no protection for them but in the sword.²

The tidings from the northward seemed to indicate a combined movement of the two hostile armies,— a measure so accordant with sound military principles, that Washington, supposing that his adversary would do what evidently he ought to do, and looking suspiciously upon the passes of the Highlands, advanced first to Morristown, next to Pompton Plains, and thence to Ramapo Clove.

In the midst of these movements came disastrous tidings from the North.

“ General St. Clair,” Greene writes from Pompton Plains on the 13th of July, “ who commanded at Ticonderoga, has evacuated that important post. His garrison consisted of between four and five thousand men, in good health and high spirits. With such a garrison, strongly intrenched and well armed, fully supplied with provisions and ammunition, and the works defended by one hundred and seventy pieces of cannon, it was evacuated without firing a gun. General Schuyler had two thousand men with him at Fort Edward. General Nixon was on his

¹ Gordon, Vol. II. p. 470. Sparks's Washington, Vol. IV. pp. 465—482. Arnold to Mifflin. Almon's Remembrancer, Vol. V. p. 268.

² Letters to a Nobleman upon the Conduct of the War in the Middle Colonies. Letter III.

march from Albany with upwards of one thousand Continental troops, the militia of the country coming in from all quarters to the aid of the garrison; and the commanding officer, fully acquainted with all these circumstances, has abandoned the post. What could induce him to take such a measure God only knows! Burgoyne's whole force only consisted of five thousand five hundred men, — the whole is a mystery to all the army. Charity obliges me to suspend all ill-natured reflections, but I fear there has been some misconduct somewhere. Our affairs never were in so prosperous a train as they were before this. This affair will give us a severe wound. But by the blessing of God I hope to recover the shock. What has become of the garrison, whether they are prisoners or gone down to No. 4, I cannot learn. I think it is probable I shall be sent to the North.

“ General Howe and almost all his troops are embarked, their destination unknown. I have had some fears for Providence, but Philadelphia or the North River are objects of much greater importance. We are on our march to join General Putnam on the North River.”

It was evident that somebody must be promptly sent to the North. Washington felt the necessity, but hesitated in his choice.

“ It is not determined who goes to Ticonderoga,” Greene writes to his wife on the 17th. “ I can plainly see the General wants me to go, but is unwilling to part with me; he has set several persons to sound my inclinations. I will go if the General give the order and the good of the service requires it; but I feel a reluctance, and the more so as it is disagreeable to you. If I am left at liberty to consult my own inclination, I shall not go; but if my honor and reputation becomes interested, I must consent, and I

am sure your love and affection is such, if my character is at stake, to give your consent also."

As he foresaw, the General was "unwilling to part with him"; and for him the change would have been the more unwelcome, as his wife was now within a day's ride of him at Mr. Lott's, and he was very happy to have her there.

"Mr. and Mrs. Lott," he writes, "are laying us under an obligation never to be cancelled; their politeness, kindness, hospitality and friendship to you and me impresses my heart with a weight of gratitude that almost makes me unhappy from the little prospect I have of making a suitable return for their goodness. Never did I see a finer family in all my life. I am sure you will love and respect them. . . . I long to be with you again. The soft delights, the sweet pleasures of social endearments I felt at our meeting, still dances round my heart, makes me wish their continuance; but Fate, cruel Fate! cuts the thread, and leaves but the remembrance of past pleasures to console us for solid enjoyments. Heaven grant you protection, my dear angel, through all the slippery paths of life, give you prudence, patience, and health to enjoy your friends and make everybody love you as I do,—only in a less degree!"

No wonder that he looked reluctantly upon a campaign in Canada. Lincoln, a judicious and brave officer was sent in his stead, and he gladly remained by the side of his beloved commander. Still closely watching the British, General Washington advanced eleven miles into the Clove, making, says Pickering's diary, "his head-quarters at Galloways, an old log-house. The General lodged in a bed, his family

on the floor about him. We had plenty of supawn and milk, and all were contented.”¹

“His conduct is puzzling and embarrassing beyond measure,” Washington writes to Schuyler on the 22d. “So are the informations which I get. At one time the ships are standing up towards the North River; in a little while they are going up the Sound; and in an hour after they are going out of the Hook.”²

Again the army was drawn back to Ramapo.

“We are this moment returned to our old quarters at this place,” Greene writes to his wife on the 23d. “Our future motions will depend entirely upon General Howe’s motions. If he goes into New England, we shall follow him; if he goes to Philadelphia, we shall go there. Our march will (be) rapid if the fleet moves to the westward. I hope, however, not so rapid but that I shall have an opportunity to call and see you. If our accommodations were better, and your health and strength capable of enduring the fatigue, I could wish to see you here to-morrow, and some of the young ladies with you. Our accommodations are not good. However, I believe our stay will be short here,—perhaps we may march in the morning. If you should set out to come on, if we should march I shall send forward an aide-de-camp to notify you thereof. This I shall do whether you come or not, if we march to Philadelphia or to the eastward.”

At last the veil was partly lifted.

“I have just received information,” Washington writes to Lincoln on the 24th, “that the fleet left the Hook yes-

¹ Pickering’s MSS. Diary. For rapher, Octavius Pickering, of Cam-
the use of which I am indebted to bridge.
the kindness of his son and biog. ² Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 505.

terday, and as I think the Delaware the most probable place of their destination, I shall immediately move the army that way.”¹

By the end of the month the American army was once more on the banks of the Delaware,—part of them at Coryell’s Ferry, part at Howell’s Ferry, and part at Trenton,—still waiting in painful uncertainty to become assured “of the real destination of the enemy.”²

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. IV. p. 505.

² Ibid., Vol. V. p. 7.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Greene, Sullivan, and Knox on the Point of resigning.—Their Conduct misrepresented.—Defects of the Civil Government of the Revolution.—Change in the Relations bewteen Congress and the Country.—Relations of Congress to the State Governments.—To the Army.—Opposition and Collisions.—Question of Promotion.—Letters to John Adams.—Foreign Officers.—Du Coudray.—Conditional Tender of Resignation.—Congress very angry.—Resolutions.—Interruption of Greene's Correspondence with John Adams.—Letter to President of Congress.

WHILE all eyes were thus turned northward or seaward, and attention was waiting painfully upon the steps of Howe and Burgoyne, of Schuyler and Washington, another question had arisen which threatened for the moment to deprive the country of the services of three of its best generals, Greene, Sullivan, and Knox. As the story of this transaction has never yet been fully told, and Greene has more than once been taxed with precipitancy for an act which was the result of mature deliberation, I shall endeavor, as far as my materials permit, to show by what causes he was led, at so critical a moment, to an act so decisive as the conditional tender of his resignation.

It was one of the misfortunes of the times, that the civil government of the Revolution should have resolved upon a legislative assembly. The first Continental Congress enjoyed and deserved in a re-

markable degree the respect and confidence of the country. The second Congress was composed of eminent men, and succeeded, for a time, to the honors and reputation of the first. But when it attempted to pass from discussion to organization, and to direct as well as to frame the machinery of administration, its delays and disputes and errors and contradictions and hesitations excited a well-founded distrust of its executive skill. Conscious of this distrust, it became jealous of its authority ; and instead of endeavoring to regain, by correcting its errors, the ground which it had lost by committing them, it grew suspicious and exacting in proportion to the decay of its strength. And while this critical change in its relations to the country was taking place, important changes took place also in the materials of which it was composed,—some of its wisest members being removed by death, or imperative calls to other fields of duty, or by failing of re-election at the regular expiration of their terms of office.

Among the first elements with which it was brought into collision were the newly organized governments of the States. The question of State rights, that unsolved problem of our history, begins almost with the beginning of the war. How abundant and active the materials of disunion were, and how difficult it was even for leading men to rise above them might be proved by numerous passages in the letters of Washington and Greene, if it were not still more evident from the conduct of the local

legislatures. How far this spirit might have been counteracted or controlled if the policy of the Congress had been that policy of prompt decision and energetic action which, commanding respect at all times, commands in times of general danger general and implicit obedience, it is impossible to say. The problem of union was a complex problem, hedged round with natural and artificial difficulties, to which the political science of the day, contemplating it from a lower point of view and with a narrow horizon, afforded no satisfactory solution. To meet it and solve it in the midst of an exhausting civil war required a larger comprehension, a firmer control of the passions, and a clearer perception of general truths, than are often given to large bodies, whether they meet for deliberation or for action. They were not given to the Congress nor to the State governments of the Revolution.

Another element with which it was brought into immediate and constant relations was the army; and, unfortunately for both, these relations, from their very nature, brought into immediate and constant contrast the elements of opposition which they both contained, rather than the elements of harmonious action, which they also contained in an almost equal degree. If the Congress was composed of the representatives of the people, the army was composed in a large proportion of the constituents of the Congress. More than once also, during the course of the war, men who had done good service for their country as soldiers, withdraw-

ing from their original field of action, did equally good service for her as statesmen. And more than once, too, men who had proved themselves wise and eloquent in counsel were found at the head of a regiment, or even in more subordinate positions in the army. Sullivan, Schuyler, and Varnum became distinguished members of Congress, after having been distinguished generals. John Dickinson was serving in the army during a part of 1776 with the same zeal with which he had served in Congress during another part of the same year. Washington himself had passed directly from his seat in Congress Hall to the camp before Boston. The real interest and the real object of the citizen in arms and of the citizen in the toga were still the same.

But their point of view was different. The ever-present object of Congress was discussion as a means of organization. The ever-present object of the leaders of the army was decision as a means of action. Congress counted obstacles, weighed difficulties, balanced opposing advantages, eating and sleeping meanwhile and refreshing mind and body as nature bade. But while Congress was deliberating upon the best way of procuring meat, the army was often brought to the verge of starvation for the want of it. While Congress was discussing by a warm fire the most eligible method of providing the army with tents and blankets, half the army was sleeping on the snow without either blanket or tent. While Congress was framing elaborate resolutions, and drawing out and equipping regiments upon

paper, officers in the field were standing disheartened before their thinned and disheartened ranks. No object could wear the same shape or color to men who contemplated it from such different points of view.

And yet the object of Congress and the army was the same,—independence; and in both bodies the leaders were contending for it under the same fearful responsibility of fortune and life.

In an organized government, the army, however constituted, is the instrument of government, and subject implicitly to its control. In a revolutionary government, the army is the organ of revolution; and government, in its relations with it, must recognize its equal claims to respect and consideration, for the only hold upon it is the hold of opinion. When the war began, Congress held the army by harmony of opinion, and might easily have continued so to hold it until the end of the war. But to do this, it should have made it its aim to inspire the army with confidence in its justice and energy. Errors of statesmanship, like errors of generalship, would easily have been forgiven and forgotten; for both statesmen and generals had still much to learn. Unfortunately, while the best generals strove earnestly to correct their errors by their experience, Congress, in too many things, clung obstinately to its errors, in spite of the most decisive experience.

Those errors were twofold,—errors of policy and errors of principle,—the one tending to un-

dermine the respect which, in the beginning, was felt for their wisdom ; the other, to awaken a general distrust of their justice.

The first year of the war demonstrated the danger of short enlistments and temporary levies. But more than half the second year was allowed to pass before it was decided to raise an army for the whole duration of the war. The first campaign demonstrated the necessity of providing by regularly organized departments for the food, clothing, and transportation of the army ; but it was not till late in the second year that a board of war was organized ; and not till later still that the Quartermaster-General and Commissary-General were allowed to devote themselves to their duty in camp, instead of waiting idly for orders at the door of Congress. All experience and the simplest reasoning showed the importance of strengthening the hands of their General by passing promptly all the acts needed for the conduct of an army in the field, or the support and instruction of an army in quarters ; but, in spite of all experience and the plainest reason, Congress persisted in its unseasonable delays. Washington was compelled to take the field, with his ranks half filled, his magazines inadequately supplied, and his men badly clothed, badly armed, and often ignorant of the first rudiments of their duty. The policy of the Congress, in the organization and support of the army, was a policy of tergiversation and delay. No wonder that the army, leaders and all, should early lose their confidence in its wisdom !

But the dissatisfaction did not end here. One of the earliest felt of the numerous wants of the army was the want of good officers,—men to whose intelligence, judgment, and consciences the lives of their subordinates could be intrusted with full confidence that the trust would neither be rashly assumed nor carelessly administered. To select them in the beginning from the mass of unproved candidates was impossible; but in the course of two campaigns, the characters and pretensions of men were well tried, the chaff thoroughly sifted, and what remained might be confidently accepted as sound. The army of 1777 contained materials out of which all the vacant grades might be safely and adequately filled; not, indeed, with men who had learned their profession in all its details, but with men who had been tried in battle, had been tried in long marches and comfortless encampments, and who had given abundant proofs of courage, intelligence, and endurance. The raw recruits that came into the hands of men like these soon became patient of labor and privation, and bold in the presence of the enemy. It was evidently the policy of Congress to secure by all proper and reasonable inducements the services of such officers for the war. It was the duty of Congress, in its dealings with them, to remember that in becoming soldiers, and exposing themselves to the dangers and privations of a soldier's life, they adopted, with the ideas of subordination that lie at the basis of military discipline, the ideas of rank

and grade which define and circumscribe that subordination.

But Congress remembered nothing of this. It required of them the service of officers, but gave them a pay hardly sufficient to enable them to live like private soldiers. It demanded the present sacrifice of cold, hunger, hard service, and exposure to sickness, wounds, and death ; and refused the prospective reward of half-pay or pension when sickness or wounds should have incapacitated them for further exertion, or death should have made their wives unprotected widows, and their children helpless orphans. Forgetting that pride is an essential element of the military character, and that self-respect is essential to a healthy and sustaining pride, it trifled with their claims to rank by the accepted rules of service, and claimed and exercised the power of dealing with commissions according to its own good pleasure. John Adams, as we have already seen, did not hesitate to write : “Our late promotions may possibly give disgust, but that cannot be avoided” ; and by an error which, though not uncommon, is one of the most baneful into which a statesman can fall, applying a principle of Grecian and Roman polity to a society founded upon an entirely different basis from that of Greece and Rome, he added :—

“ I hope, for my own part, that Congress will elect annually all the general officers. If, in consequence of this, some great men should be obliged at the year’s end to go home and serve their country in some other capacity, not

less necessary, and better adapted to their genius, I do not think the public would be ruined. The officers of the army ought to consider that the rank, the dignity, and the rights of whole States, are of more importance than this point of honor; more, indeed, than the solid glory of any particular officer. The States insist, with great justice and sound policy, on having a share of the general officers in some proportion to the quotas of troops they are to raise. This principle has occasioned some of our late promotions; and it ought to satisfy gentlemen. But, if it does not, they, as well as the public, must abide the consequences of their discontent.”¹

It did not satisfy gentlemen; for they very naturally thought that the sacrifice of domestic happiness and professional advantages which they had made, and were still making, gave them an unquestionable claim to all the privileges which the usages of modern society attached to their official position. They felt that, by those usages, to be superseded was to be degraded; and that, if much was due to the critical condition of their country, something also was due to that universal principle of human nature which compels the man who has been degraded in his own eyes to look upon himself as hopelessly degraded in the eyes of the world. Therefore the laws of promotion became at a very early period of the war a subject of serious thought to all who were within the sphere of their influence; and, except the Commander-in-chief, all were almost equally within it. And thus, as early as the second campaign, it came to be re-

¹ Life of John Adams, by Charles Francis Adams, p. 263.

garded as an accepted principle, and consequently, an imperative rule of action, that the promotion of a junior officer over a senior must, except in the case of some distinguished service, be received as a public declaration that the senior was unfit for his position.¹

How Greene felt upon this subject, and how he felt towards Congress, will best appear from his own letters. His correspondence with Samuel Ward from the camp before Boston had given him an early view of the dissensions in Congress; and his official position, as well as his personal relations towards Washington, had given him a distinct view of the dilatoriness of its action. Still, he had hoped that the Declaration of Independence, by pledging all to the same cause, might lead to greater harmony of sentiment, and that the necessity of united exertion for sustaining that declaration might produce greater promptness of action. How these hopes waxed and waned with the fluctuations of events I have already shown, wherever I have found an expression of them in his letters. In 1777 they had sunk very low.

¹ For the facts on which these generalizations are founded, I must refer to Washington's and Greene's letters, to the Journals of Congress, and to the contemporary histories, which, if I am not greatly mistaken, bear me fully out in all my positions. It is the greatest of all absurdities to represent the Revolution as the work of either the people or of Congress; it was the work of a few leading men who inspired confidence and awak-

ened enthusiasm in spite of the errors of Congress and the shortcomings of the people. But for the reverence inspired by Washington, the people would have failed the Congress and Congress the people. But for the sustaining sympathy of Greene, Sullivan, Schuyler, Knox, Hamilton, the two Morrises, and a few more, both civilians and soldiers, Washington would have sunk under the burden of responsibility and labor.

We have already found him writing to Washington from Philadelphia, towards the end of March: "There is so much deliberation and waste of time in the execution of business before this Assembly, that my patience is almost exhausted. I cannot get the resolve respecting the cartel passed so soon as I want it. I know your delicate situation, and the anxiety you must be under." For want of this cartel, hundreds of gallant soldiers were languishing in the sugar-houses and prison-ships of New York.

On the 8th of April Congress had passed a resolve for erecting monuments to Warren and Mercer. One had already been voted to Montgomery on the 25th of January, 1776. Greene welcomes the act as wise and just. He sees in it the means of binding the Congress and the army more closely together, and strengthening the influence of the one by increasing the confidence of the other.

"The monuments," he writes to John Adams on the 2d of May, "you are erecting to the memory of the great heroes Warren, Montgomery, and Mercer will be a pleasing circumstance to the army in general, and, at the same time, a piece of justice due to the bravery of the unfortunate generals. These things are attended with but little expense, and have great influence. I would beg leave to propose another species of honor to animate the living to great and worthy actions. Patriotism is a glorious principle, but never refuse her the necessary aids. Let a number of medals be struck, of different figures emblematical of great actions, with a motto expressive of the same. These medals to be presented by

Congress to such of the officers as shall perform some great and noble act,—specified by some previous resolution for that purpose,—the officer that claims it to wear it as a mark of distinction due to his merit. These will be a species of honors attended with no expense, and at the same time have a great influence. They will also serve to fix the honors of the army, dependent upon the dignity of Congress; and I conceive it an object of great importance to unite the wishes of the army with the views of Congress. . . .

“I concur with you in sentiment as to the propriety and necessity of taxation. Had the measure been adopted in New England, instead of endeavoring to regulate the prices of things, it would have had a much better effect. You may rely upon the army in general, and me in particular, doing everything in our power to aid and assist the Congress in carrying into execution every necessary resolve as far as our influence extends.”

If he was frank in condemning the errors of Congress, he was evidently no less frank in acknowledging its merits. Nor was he less ready to acknowledge the vices of the army.

“You lament,” he writes to the same correspondent on the 28th of May, “the general corruption of manners, and the increase of vicious habits, that prevail in the army. It is a serious truth, and much to be lamented. I know of nothing that a people can receive in exchange for the loss of their morals that is an equivalent. I am sensible of the force and justice of your remarks, that the vices of the army prevent many from engaging in the service, more than the hardships and dangers attending it.

“I am not one of those fine gentlemen who despises all moral rectitude and religious duties. Although I am no

enthusiast, nevertheless I most devoutly believe in the observance of religious duties."

He had already written, "The clergy are most certainly useful and necessary in the army, and ought to be decently provided for."

Adams, it must be remembered, was chairman of the Board of War:—

"You say," Greene writes to him on the 7th of May, "your opinion is of no consequence to the continent, and you are happy it is not. You add, had you conceived the conduct of our army, or the defence against the operations of the enemy, depended in any degree upon you, you should not have contented yourself with such vague conjectures. I am at a loss to conceive your meaning. Are not the military operations entirely under the direction of Congress? Have you not all the information that we have respecting the enemy's force and ours? Are you not acquainted with the enemy's motions, and of ours also, as early as possible? Are you not as deeply interested in the consequences of this dispute as any one man in America? Have your constituents not a right to expect you'll give your counsel in every instance when it may be useful? Would you persuade me you are insensible of the weight and influence your opinion hath in all public measures? Under all these considerations, how am I to conceive your opinion is of no consequence, and that you are happy it is not?"

"I readily agree with you in sentiment, that there is no one man, either in the civil or military line, of such mighty consequence that the liberties of America are dependent upon his will or existence. Yet there are several in both departments that America might sensibly feel the loss of at this time. If I could persuade myself that am-

bition was the leading principle, either in the cabinet or field, I would have no further connection with the dispute ; for I feel the principle of humanity too forcibly to think myself justifiable to sacrifice the happiness of thousands only for the purpose of rearing up a few important characters.

“ I note your observations upon a certain general, that he might be of more importance to the continent if he thought himself of less. Your opinion, in this instance, is very different (if I remember right) from what it was last summer upon a similar occasion. Then you said it was necessary to think more of ourselves and things less impracticable,—this was the way to surmount difficulties. Although I wish the Congress to support their dignity in every instance, yet I hope they will carefully avoid sporting with the finer feelings of the gentlemen of the army, unless it is necessary for the good of the public or to support their own dignity.

“ You observe that prejudice, caprice, and variety are the common offspring of all revolutions, and that I have less to fear from them than I imagine. These evils will rather increase than decrease with the confusion of the times, and they will rage in proportion as the dispute grows more or less doubtful. If you wish to establish your own authority ; if you wish to give a proper tone to every State ; if you wish to silence all the little factions that restless spirits may produce ; if you wish to be feared abroad, and loved and respected at home,—establish your army in its full force. Nothing can give you so much authority, weight, and dignity as an army at your command, superior to all your foreign and domestic enemies. The prospect of safety will be a pleasing circumstance to the people, and conciliate and reconcile them fully to your administration. An army thus organized, government fully established in the respective States, the

authority of Congress fully acknowledged by each, cannot fail of making America both easy and contented and happy at home, and loved and feared abroad. Nothing can be more mortifying and distressing to the feelings of humanity than a long continuance of the present calamities; and more especially when we consider that, by a proper exertion, we may exterminate those hostile invaders of human happiness and the rights of mankind. Remember the long war with the United States, and the blood and treasure spent in that dispute for want of a proper exertion at first."

It is evident, from these letters, that Greene is far from claiming for the military department powers that belong to the civil department. Another letter brings out this fact in still stronger light:—

"I have had it hinted to me," he says in a letter of the 28th of May, "that General Schuyler was about to be created President of the Congress, and to hold his military command in the army. I take this early opportunity of expressing my abhorrence of such a measure. No free people ought to admit a junction of the civil and military; and no man of good principles would ask it, or ever accept of an appointment which may be improved by corruption to the prejudice and injury of the rights of a free people. The best way to guard against evil is to avoid temptation. If General Schuyler is (of) a mind to be in Congress, let him resign his commission, and not hold two offices so incompatible one with the other. I have no objection to General Schuyler as a general, neither have I to his being President of the Congress, if he is thought to be the most suitable person for that important trust. But he must cease to be a general before he commences a member of Congress. I will not hold a

commission under that State who blends those two characters together. I think them incompatible with the safety of a free people, and I can assure you, I am not fighting for a change of masters, but to have none but the law."

But while he was thus prepared to uphold the dignity of the civil power he claimed the privilege of freely animadverting upon its errors.

"I have no wish to see such a large proportion of important offices in the military department in the hands of foreigners. I cannot help considering them as so many spies in our camp,¹ ready to take their measures as their interest may direct. If foreigners are introduced, their command should not be very extensive, then the injury cannot be great, but even in this case it is an injury to America, for the multiplying foreign officers gives us no internal strength. A good nursery of officers, nursed by experience, firmly attached to the interest of the country, is a great security against foreign invaders. The only tie that we have upon foreigners, is the sentiment of honor, too slender for the happiness of a country to depend upon,—while officers created from among the people are bound, not only by the ties of honor, but by that of interest and family connection. We, in many instances, see the power of British gold; let us not neglect to guard against its influence. I have no narrow prejudices upon this subject, neither have I any private differences with any of those gentlemen. My opinion is founded upon the general conduct of mankind."

¹ That Greene's view of the real character of many of these men was just, no one can doubt who has read Duportail's letter to the French Minister, or DeKalb's letters to the Duke de Broglie. The remark does not apply, nor in strict chronology could it, to Lafayette or Steuben. Fleury, Armand, Kosciusko, and Pulaski also belong to the exceptions.

On the 28th of May, in the same letter in which he speaks so strongly of the rumored appointment of Schuyler to the Presidency of Congress, he returns again to the subject of foreign officers:—

“ I must again repeat the impropriety of creating so many foreign officers. A very considerable part of our force will get into their hands. What method can Great Britain take to defeat us more effectually than to introduce a great number of foreigners into the army, and bind them to their interest by some very interesting considerations? That this is practicable, nobody will doubt. That we ought to guard against it, everybody must allow. British gold may reason forcibly with those whose hopes and future expectations are not connected with the people they betray.

“ I am told by Captain Moduit (Mauduit), a French gentleman lately created a captain in the train of artillery, that one Du Coudre (Coudray) is engaged by Mr. Deane as major-general of the train. The impropriety of putting a foreigner at the head of such a department must be obvious to everybody: besides the impropriety, you will deprive the army of a most valuable officer, universally acknowledged as such. The exchange will be much against you, besides the injustice you will do to a man who has served you with fidelity and reputation. I beg you will take it under consideration seasonably. I know not the powers of Mr. Deane, but I think such powers are dangerous and unfit to trust with any man. If this gentleman is to be appointed a major-general, I wish it may be of the foot instead of the artillery.”

Washington was writing letters of similar import at the same time.¹ And in a letter of the 4th of

¹ See particularly a letter of May 31st, to the President of Congress. Sparks, Vol. IV. p. 444.

June to one of his brothers, Greene repeats in substance what he had twice represented so strongly to Mr. Adams.

“God knows how long this war may last; the want of union and virtue among the Americans may protract it for some time. We have now a very respectable force in the field from the southward, though not large. The Eastern troops are very backward in coming on. The State of Pennsylvania is in great confusion. The Quakers are poisoning everybody: foolish people! The Congress and I do not agree in politics; they are introducing a great many foreigners. I think it dangerous to trust so large a part of the American army to the command of strangers. British gold is of a poisonous quality, and the human heart treacherous to the last degree. There are no less than four general officers of the [French] nation now in the American service. There is a French gentleman sent over by Mr. Deane to have the command of all the artillery in America. If his appointment is confirmed, it will rob us of one of the best, or at least, as good an officer as we have in the service, General Knox. I tremble for the consequences, as I fear it will ruin the whole corps, and it is now upon a very respectable footing, and increasing in perfection daily. Wisdom and prudence sometimes forsake the wisest bodies. I am exceedingly distressed at the state of things in the great National Council.”

With an opinion so decided, so evidently the result of patient meditation, and so perfectly in harmony with the opinion of Washington, it is easy to conceive that he watched the action of Congress carefully, and waited anxiously for the result. He received assurances, it is said, from Mr.

Adams, that Deane's contract would not be confirmed;¹ but he received also, through another channel and from another member of Congress, an equally positive assurance, not only that Du Coudray had obtained the full rank which that contract assured him, but that his commission was to be dated from the 1st of August, of the preceding year, eight days earlier than his own. If he had approved of Knox's view of the question, while as yet it had no apparent bearing upon his own rank, he could not hesitate about the course which self-respect and consistency required of him, when it was thus unexpectedly brought to his door. In the view of the army, to be superseded, was to be degraded; and, in a position wholly dependent upon opinion for its efficiency, to be degraded was to be deprived of the power of honorable exertion. On the 1st of July, more than a month after he had called the attention of Mr. Adams to Du Coudray's pretensions, he wrote to the President of Congress:—

“A report is circulating here at camp, that Monsieur Du Coudray, a French gentleman, is appointed a major-general in the service of the United States, his rank to commence from the 1st of last August; if the report be true, it will lay me under the necessity of resigning my commission, as his appointment supersedes me in command. I beg you 'll acquaint me with respect to the truth of the report, and if true, enclose me a permit to retire.”

¹ Life of John Adams, p. 264.

The same mail which carried this letter carried letters of the same import from Sullivan and Knox. Congress was very angry, and after discussing them Saturday, July 5th, resumed the discussion Monday, the 7th; and, "unanimously" resolved: —

"That the President transmit to General Washington copies of the letters from Generals Sullivan, Greene, and Knox to Congress, with directions to him to let those officers know that Congress consider the said letters as an attempt to influence their decisions, an invasion of the liberties of the people, and indicating a want of confidence in the justice of Congress; that it is expected by Congress the said officers will make proper acknowledgments for an interference of so dangerous a tendency; but if any of those officers are unwilling to serve their country, under the authority of Congress, they shall be at liberty to resign their commissions and retire."¹

John Adams, it is supposed by his biographer, was the author of this resolution;² and, not content with this, he wrote Greene a private letter, "placing before him at once," says the same authority, "the alternative of withdrawing his act or of giving in his resignation." How Greene viewed Adams's letter I have no positive means of ascertaining. Mr. C. F. Adams says, "Greene never answered Mr. Adams's private letter, nor did he resume the correspondence."³ The correspondence, it is true, was dropped somewhere about this time; and it is not till the 28th of January, 1782,

¹ See Journals of Congress *ad diem.*

² Life of John Adams, p. 264.
³ Ibid., p. 265.

that I again find him writing to Mr. Adams. But in that letter, which was an answer to a letter of Mr. Adams, introducing the Count de Noailles, and expressing a desire to renew their correspondence, he not only says, "the correspondence had been dropped from your disinclination and not mine," but attributes that disinclination to "prejudices" which Adams "had let in to my disadvantage, such as my being more influenced by men than measures, and that in the field I had neither activity nor enterprise. However mortifying these things were, my pride would not permit me to undeceive you." Now, unless we suppose Greene's memory to have been singularly at fault, we must lay the interruption of the correspondence to Mr. Adams, and not to him; and, consequently, must suppose that he did answer the letter in which his somewhat arrogant correspondent undertook to instruct him in the law of duty and honor. What the tone of that answer was likely to be may be conjectured from his letter of the 19th to the President of Congress, acknowledging the communication of the angry resolve of the 7th:—

"His Excellency has communicated to me a resolution of Congress, of the 7th inst., founded upon three letters from the Generals Sullivan, Knox, and myself, relative to Mr. Du Coudray's supposed appointment, agreeable to the contract between him and Mr. Deane.

"I confess that it was matter of infinite surprise to me that an interpretation of so deep a complexion should have been put upon a meaning so innocent and inoffensive

as that contained in those letters. Nor can I be persuaded but that Congress, upon a dispassionate review of the matter, will readily perceive that they have embraced ideas by no means deducible from anything we have done; and will in justice recall a censure equally severe, unmerited, and injurious. It is a fact well known, that Mr. Deane, a public envoy from these States, did make a contract with Mr. Du Coudray investing him with the supreme command of the artillery, and the rank of major-general from the 1st of August last; this contract I verily believed the Congress had confirmed and ratified. It is unnecessary to mention the reasons that induced that belief; but what seemed to stamp it with infallible certainty was a letter from a member of Congress to that import, who might be supposed to speak the sense of that body.

“ We could not possibly divine the secret intentions of Congress; and could only judge from appearances and circumstances of common notoriety, which concurred to establish the idea that prevailed. On the supposition that I was superseded by Mr. Du Coudray, could my feelings and determination be any other than what they there appeared? And can it be said that I had not competent ground for making that supposition? Its not having been at once openly announced by Congress is no objection to it, for this was ascribed to, and might have proceeded from, motives of delicacy; for although reasons of policy might demand the sacrifice, and necessity urge the measure, yet that delicacy would dictate the propriety that the knowledge of it should come to me through a different and more indirect channel.

“ I see not how similar applications to Congress from three officers, equally interested in the same event, and consequently speaking the same language, on a principle so natural, and so well supported as that which actuated

us, could be deemed a combination, or construed into an attempt to 'influence their discussions, an invasion of the liberties of the people, and indicating a want of confidence in the justice of Congress.' Did I not know it to be the case, I could not imagine that these expressions had not other foundation than merely a request (from officers who had reason to believe themselves superseded), to be permitted to retire, on condition it should be so; how could this be considered as an attempt to influence their decisions? For my own part, I shall retire from the service without a single murmur, when the interest or happiness of my country demands so necessary a sacrifice. I trust the Congress in all their acts have an eye to the common good, and never do violence to the feelings of individuals, but where necessity sanctifies the measure. To refuse a person liberty to retire in this situation would be cruel and unjust. I do not hold my character as an officer in such high estimation as to think that declaring my intention to resign could have any effect upon the determination of Congress, especially in a matter in which 't is to be supposed they act either from national views of policy, or from a preference to superior merit. Neither am I disposed to enter into any unlawful combination to do myself private justice, however great my injuries, real or imaginary. In the present case my situation was rendered ineligible; my feelings as a soldier forbid my holding a command that was linked with evident signs of personal degradation. I had no conception that an application founded upon a supposed event could either be affrontive to the delicacy or dignity of the governors of a free people; and, therefore, am persuaded my meaning and intentions must have been wholly mistaken.

"Whatever influence I could have must be in proportion to the importance of my military character; take

this away, and I stand upon the footing of a common citizen ; and it seems to me somewhat extraordinary, that an offer to lay that aside should be deemed to import such dangerous consequences as are imputed to it. I did not complain of any injustice, demand reparation for any injury, but simply state the information I received, and ask permission to retire if it was true. The question of right is entirely untouched.

“ There are often weighty motives for superseding officers of whatever rank, and this might possibly have been the case in what I thought had happened, so that the supposition did not by any necessary implication impeach the justice of Congress ; but as I was not acquainted with these reasons, and perhaps could hardly be brought to feel their force if I was, I only declared my wish to conform to those maxims universally established among civilized nations, and necessary to be upheld in the military line, and to relinquish a station which I could no longer fill with satisfaction or honor to myself. I might add much to show that my letter does not warrant the construction put upon it ; but 'tis a subject of a delicate nature, and will not admit of a free discussion.

“ With respect to that part of the resolution which declares ‘ that if any of those officers are unwilling to serve their country, under the authority of Congress, he shall have liberty to retire,’ I answer that I have all the respect for Congress a free citizen ought to have for the representatives of himself and the collective body of the people, and that it is my glory and happiness to serve my country, under the authority of those delegated by her to direct her councils and support her interests. I have not a single thought or wish inconsistent with this ; but at the same time, I as freely answer that I esteem it my duty to do it in a manner most compatible with the

dignity of the man, the citizen, and that of a soldier, while I sustain the character; and will immediately renounce any station in which I cannot act with honor, and have recourse to that in which I can flatter myself I shall always be ambitious of, the character of a useful and good member of society. In my military capacity, I have and will serve my country to the utmost of my ability while I hold it, but I am determined to hold it not a moment longer than I can do it unsullied and unviolated."

"A letter of the 19th, from General Greene, and one of the same date from Joseph Trumbull, were read," says the Journal of Congress for the 23d of July, "*Ordered, To lie on the table.*"

"Your letter of the 8th was duly received," writes Washington to the President of Congress, on the 12th of July; "and, agreeably to your request, I communicated to Generals Greene and Knox the resolution of Congress respecting them and General Sullivan, the last of whom I have not seen since it came to hand."¹

No further allusion to the subject occurs, as far as I have been able to ascertain, either in the Journals of Congress or in the private correspondence of the three generals. To Washington it is not probable that Greene communicated either of his letters, for while he could entertain no doubt of Washington's opinion as a soldier, he had too much respect and consideration for his position as commander-in-chief to ask for a positive expression of it upon so delicate an occasion. What Washington thought his own letters show;

¹ Journals of Congress *ad diem.* Sparks's Washington, Vol. IV. p. 490.

and, in weighing all the evidence, it seems more than probable that Congress was upon the point of committing a great injustice, and doing a very unwise and arbitrary act. As it was, on the very day on which it passed its angry resolution it voted an advance of a thousand dollars to Du Coudray; and it was not until the question had been many days in the hands of a committee, and several times before the House in committee of the whole, that a final decision was reached. Instead of giving him the command of all the artillery, it was resolved: "That Mons. Du Coudray be appointed inspector-general of ordnance and military manufactories, with the rank of major-general."¹

¹ Journals of Congress, Monday, Aug. 11, 1777.

CHAPTER XIX.

American Army on the Banks of the Delaware.—Perplexed by Howe's Movements.—Different Opinions about them.—Uneasiness caused by the Evacuation of Ticonderoga.—Glimpse of Inner Life.—Schuyler and New England Officers.—Letters and Extracts.—Council of War.—Lafayette.—Army on the Point of Moving Northward.—Howe in Chesapeake Bay.—American Army marches Southward.—March through Philadelphia.—Washington Reconnoitring.—Camp at Red Clay Creek.—Greene condemns the Position.—Henry Lee.—Army at Chad's Ford.—Battle of the Brandywine.

WE left the Americans once more on the banks of the Delaware. It is easy to imagine how the old soldiers felt as they looked upon the scene of their winter sufferings and victory,—orchards laden with fruit, fields almost ripe for the sickle, where they had left ice and snow; men and women at their daily work, and children merrily playing in the streets and at the cottage doors, where they had left an insolent enemy in all the pride and all the terrors of war. How eagerly must they have pointed out the sites of every incident to their new companions. Here we struggled with the ice. Here we landed. On that spot Washington mounted his horse. It was there that Sullivan struck into the river road; and Greene filed off to the left. At this hour, and just as day

was breaking, we found a man chopping wood, and learned from him where to look for the guard. Down that street we fired and charged, and in this orchard the Hessians laid down their arms. It is easy, too, to conceive that neither Washington nor Greene could approach these scenes without a grateful swelling of the heart, and renewed confidence in the justice of their cause.

But still all was uncertainty and doubt.

“ General Howe’s in a manner abandoning General Burgoyne,” writes Washington to Gates, from Coryell’s Ferry on the 30th, “ is so unaccountable a matter that, till I am fully assured it is so, I cannot help casting my eyes continually behind me.”¹

The next day brought intelligence that wore an air of certainty,— the fleet was at the capes of the Delaware. Washington and Greene would have still waited for more positive information ; but the pressure from without was so strong, that it was decided to advance still nearer to Philadelphia and take quarters at Germantown.² And here Washington writes to his brother on the 5th of August :—

“ We have remained in a very irksome state of suspense ; some imagining that they are gone to the southward, whilst a majority, in whose opinion upon this occasion I concur, are satisfied that they are gone to the eastward.”³ “ We are yet entirely in the dark,” he writes to Putnam on the 7th, and orders “ the heavy

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. V. p. 8. ² Sparks, *ut sup.*

² Ibid. p. 21, and Greene to Var-
num, *inf.*

baggage of the army to be thrown over the Delaware again"; and holds "the men in constant readiness to march the moment we receive any accounts of the enemy."¹

Still, "casting his eyes" anxiously behind, he put his army once more in motion for Coryell's Ferry; and once more the fleet was seen, and again an express came, booted and spurred, from Congress with the tidings. The army halts at the Cross-roads in Buck's County, waiting anxiously, curiously perhaps, to see how all these conflicting movements will end. Time lags heavily, and all grow impatient for a decision.

"We have been in and about the city of Philadelphia for near a fortnight past," Greene writes to a brother on the 11th of August, from the camp at the Cross-roads, "ignorant of General Howe's destination. I hope it will not be against New England, but I have my fears. We were marching towards Coryell's Ferry from the city, expecting the fleet was gone eastwardly, when, by an express from the President of Congress, last night, we learned that the fleet are bound westwardly. I wish it may be true. It was said that two hundred sail were seen off the coast between Delaware and Chesapeake bays; but I doubt the intelligence, for I cannot persuade myself that General Burgoyne would dare to push with such rapidity towards Albany, if he did not expect support from General Howe."

Meanwhile one of the daily topics of conversation in camp, and at head-quarters, was the army in Canada.

¹ Sparks's Washington, Vol. V. p. 24.

“ You must learn to be a philosopher,” Greene writes to a brother, from whom he had received a desponding letter ; “ to behold misfortunes without repining, limit the passions, the appetites, and desires to the state of the body, and the necessity of the times. However unfortunate things may appear, let us console ourselves with reflecting that the greatest good often springs out of what we consider as the worst of evils. General Burgoyne’s triumphs and little advantages may serve to bait his vanity, and lead him on to his total ruin. This is not improbable when we consider the temper of the human heart, the history of mankind, and the dispensations of Divine Providence upon the rise and fall of men and kingdoms. The campaign opened with a very fortunate train of circumstances. General Howe was foiled in all his manœuvres, and disgraced in every movement. Our success was equal to our utmost wishes. The Northern department has brought disgrace upon the American arms, and a cloud over New England. But even all these misfortunes may be a necessary prelude to General Burgoyne’s final overthrow. I agree with you, that there is something very mysterious in conducting the military operations to the northward. There must have been a want of judgment in the choice of the posts and extent of the works, or some great negligence in fairly representing the true state of things. We were all led to believe the situation of the place so strong by nature, and so improved by art, that the garrison was sufficient to defend itself against any number that might be brought against it. Whatever may be the source of the misfortune, it is not owing to cowardice. I have been with General St. Clair in two actions, and know him to be a man of bravery ; and it is agreed on all hands, that the garrison was in high health, and full of spirits, and left the place with great reluctance. Charity

obliges me to suspend my opinion until there is a fair and candid inquiry made into the cause of the evacuation of Ticonderoga ; and if it was necessary to evacuate it, why it had not been done earlier. If the stores and garrison had been saved, the loss of the place would have been inconsiderable.”

His brother’s letter contained gloomy pictures of the condition of the country, and the spirit of the people. Greene takes a wiser and calmer view of things :—

“ You lament the ruin of trade, the depreciation of money, and the discontent of the people are so many sure marks of the downfall of our cause. ’T is true our trade is greatly injured ; but remember, whilst it rains upon us the sun does not shine upon them. Our trade is, perhaps, not more injured than theirs ; we must balance accounts in national suffering. If the diminution of their force and resources equal our misfortunes and losses, then we are not sufferers on the great scale of national gain. The depreciation of money is rather a temporary and in some respects a local evil. The increase of trade, and a proper attention to taxation, will soon correct the evil. The army are the greatest sufferers. All the other parts of the community regulate their conduct and prices by one another. But the wages of the army are fixed and unchangeable. There is a fund of hard money now establishing in Europe sufficient to pay the interest of all our loans. This cannot fail of establishing the credit of the money abroad and at home. This is a good piece of policy. The discontent of the people is not greater than is to be expected in every revolution, when robbed of the blessings of peace and plenty, and forced into a long, and distressing war

to obtain some future advantage, that they have but an indistinct conception of. I have no doubt of a happy issue, although we may experience many calamities in the course of the dispute."

Shall I bring another side-light of domestic feeling into this self-drawn picture of the statesman and soldier?

" You distress me exceedingly," he continues, " in committing to my charge the care of your family. God grant you may long live to discharge the duty yourself. I feel the force of brotherly affection equally strong with yourself. I have been equally happy in our mutual good understanding. The sweet pleasures of social fellowship have ever been one of the greatest sources of my happiness. Few misfortunes in life, however tender my other connections may be, could equal the loss. Although I should esteem this charge one of my greatest misfortunes, yet I trust I should discharge my duty to the survivors of the family with such a brotherly affection as to leave no cause of a blush when we meet in another world. But heaven avert so great an evil to them and to me, and grant you long life and better health shall be my constant prayer."

And Heaven heard the prayer; and of his five brothers, all survived him many years,— one of them nearly a half-century, down to my early manhood.

I have spoken with a natural pride of Greene's having himself inoculated during his first visit to New York, in spite of the prejudices against it which had taken such a hold of the common mind. I find a record of another common preju-

dice which he did not escape, and trifle as it may seem, I record it, for such things are essential to the truth of my portrait. He was told that his little daughter was "marked with port wine."

"Be pleased," he writes, "to send some to the nurse and direct her to wash the part and give the child a little. This, however simple it may appear, has been often known to remove the marks."

Such were some of the thoughts that followed him to his tent, mingling with official duties and filling the heavy hours of protracted expectation. In every letter the same questions recur. Where is Howe? Where is Burgoyne? How long are we to remain here idly waiting the development of events? "You are very much mistaken about the destination of Sir William being known before yours reached me," he writes to General Varnum on the 14th.

"I am totally ignorant yet. This manœuvre of General Howe is so strange and unaccountable that it exceeds all conjecture. General Burgoyne's rapid marches into the country is a strong proof to me that he expects to be supported from some other quarter. This leads me to conclude that General Howe's designs are ultimately against New England, notwithstanding his eccentric movements. I am glad to hear you are so well prepared to defend the Highlands. I fear the obstructions in the river will scarcely prove sufficient to check the enemy's progress with their ships. Your observations are very just respecting General Schuyler; if he has lost the confidence of the people, his talents will be useless. The Congress were made sensible of that and have appointed

General Gates to the command. I hope he will succeed better. I think it an object of the first importance to give a check to Burgoyne, and the very plan you mention has often been proposed both with respect to Burgoyne and New York. Philadelphia is the American Diana, she must be preserved at all events. There is great attention paid to this city ; it is true it is one of the finest upon the continent, but in my opinion is an object of far less importance than the North River. Our position in the Jerseys was calculated to cover the North River and Philadelphia, and afford protection to the State of New Jersey, but the cry was so great for the salvation of Philadelphia that the General was prevailed upon to leave Coryell's Ferry, contrary to his judgment, and march down to the city, and I expect to have our labors for our pains. We are now within about twenty miles of the city, waiting to get better information. There have been several expresses from Sinepuxent, an inlet about half-way between Delaware and Chesapeake Bay, who confidently assert the fleet has been seen off there for several days ; but I cannot credit it. I shall mention to the General the Rhode Island troops are without commissions, and also the detachment that is detained at Rhode Island contrary to your orders."

It will be seen by the manner in which Greene speaks of Schuyler's removal from the command of the Northern army that he approved of it as a necessary act of policy at that critical moment of our fortunes. Schuyler's talent and patriotism he does not call in question, but he does question the propriety of giving him the command of men to whom he was personally unacceptable. The Northern army was composed chiefly of New England

men, and an eyewitness tells us that, believing the New England officers to be "a disgrace to their stations, Schuyler was at no pains to conceal the extreme contempt he felt for them."¹ However unfit for their stations many of these men may have been, they were officers like him, they held their commissions by the same title with him, it was through them that his orders reached the common soldier, and it was as much if not more to them than to him that the common soldier looked for the indulgences that contributed to his comfort, and the direction that made him useful. Justice as well as policy demanded a recognition of these claims. Schuyler did not recognize them, and New England men could not persuade themselves that the man who in his official intercourse with them could not command his own "peevishness"² was qualified to command them. It is difficult to see how an army of citizens, contending for their rights as citizens, could come to any other conclusion.

It would appear, moreover, that Schuyler's claims had been enforced by his friends with some degree of the haughtiness which he displayed in his intercourse with his New England officers.

"General Schuyler," Greene writes to John Adams on the 5th of April, "is going to Congress armed with the imperial cohorts of New York, to support the assertion

¹ Graydon's *Memoirs of his own Time*, p. 143.

² "He," a New England officer who came on business while the General was at dinner, "was neither asked to sit nor to take a glass of wine, and after announcing his wants, was dismissed with that peevishness of tone we apply to a low and vexatious intruder." — Graydon, p. 144.

that the Northern operations depend entirely upon his being continued in the command : a dispassionate inquiry, perhaps, may convince you of his usefulness ; if not, it will afford you an opportunity to convince the State of New York that the salvation of America don't depend upon the political sentiments of Albany County."

It is not impossible that, with all Greene's study to overcome it, some tinge of sectional feeling may have lent its coloring to his judgment upon this occasion, just as it tinged Washington's judgment of New England in '75. Neither is it impossible that he may have regarded the enforcement of Schuyler's claims as a sectional question in itself, and consequently as tending to foster a spirit which it was a duty to suppress. However this may be, his personal relations with Schuyler, though never intimate, were always pleasant. In April he wrote :—

" General Schuyler thinks, with me, that it will be exceeding difficult, if not impossible, for the enemy to penetrate the country by the way of Ticonderoga."

And in August, while justifying the policy of Schuyler's removal, he leaves his talent and patriotism unquestioned. When the whole history of the campaign became known, he probably regretted that the New York general was not permitted to gather the laurels which he had so diligently sown. But now he could only judge from facts apparently established, though not explained, and these were of a nature to awaken serious doubts and still more serious anxiety.

Meanwhile summer was passing, and the campaign hardly begun.

“ I readily acknowledge the propriety of your observation,” Greene writes to General Varnum from the Cross-roads on the 17th, “ that delays are dangerous, and that the prime of the season is wasting while we are basking in the sunshine of Pennsylvania, but repentance often comes too late. Could we have divined how General Howe would have directed his future operations, some part of your plan might have been carried into execution. The destruction of General Burgoyne’s army is one of the first objects upon the continent; but how to effect it is the question. You see he moves with caution, notwithstanding our army flies before him. It is near a month since he landed at Skeneborough. His advance parties have advanced only about twenty or thirty miles, and nothing, or next to nothing, to oppose him. Sure I am he never would have dared to penetrate an inch if he had met with a serious opposition. It is said our troops are panic-struck: this is strange; they have met with no misfortune. I am confident if there is a formidable force collected under the command of General Gates, that Burgoyne never leaves sight of his shipping. His retreat is secure while he has the command of South Bay; in that situation he will rest unless he can bring over a great part of the country to join him. How that might encourage him I cannot pretend to say. Could I persuade myself that Burgoyne would not retreat upon the Northern army’s being reinforced, I would run all hazards to attempt his obstruction. But I am well persuaded he would retreat immediately to Ticonderoga; where it would be out of our power to do him any great injury. I wish the party that is coming by the German flats would be defeated; I am much afraid of the consequences of

their successes: the disaffected people joined by the Indians will render that a troublesome neighborhood. There is a corps of riflemen detached to combat these Indians, under the command of Colonel Morgan.

“ I am under no apprehensions about the troops at Rhode Island, unless they are joined by General Howe’s forces; they are as innocent and harmless as can be expected. The greatest injury they do us is the distressing trade, and alarming the fears of the people on the surrounding shores.

“ Our situation is not a little awkward, — buried in the country, out of hearing of the enemy. His Excellency is exceedingly impatient; but it is said, if Philadelphia is lost, all, all is ruined. It is a great object to be sure, but not of that great magnitude that it claims in the measure of the American police: Rest assured we shall not remain idle long. This is a curious campaign: in the spring we had the enemy about our ears every hour; the Northern army could neither see nor hear of an enemy. Now they have got the enemy about their heads and we have lost ours, compelled to wander about the country like the Arabs in search of them.

“ I think there is force enough gone and going to the northward, if they are well directed and led on with spirit; but without that they will be idle and useless.

“ I am glad to hear your forces are healthy; ours are growing more so than they were. I can assure you I was no advocate for coming so hastily here; for I ever thought General Howe’s motions very equivocal. But the loss of Philadelphia would injure us more than our taking New York would them. And it is not certain our rapid march did not hinder the enemy from coming up the Bay to the city: they were hovering about the coast for several days ‘t is very certain.”

The camp on the Neshaminy was beginning to grow uncomfortable under the hot August sun, and there was much reason to fear that a longer stay might seriously affect the health of the army.¹ Washington resolved to change his ground. But at the same time he had become convinced that the British fleet was gone to the southward, and that in changing his ground it was full time to make some move of sufficient importance to counteract the effects of the loss of Charleston,—if Charleston, as now was feared, should fall into the hands of the enemy. He accordingly called a council on the morning of the 21st, and upon a careful consideration of the subject it was unanimously concluded,—1st, “That the enemy had most probably sailed for Charleston ; 2d, That it was not expedient for the army to march southward, as it could not possibly arrive in time to afford any succor ; 3d, That the army should move immediately towards the North River.”² It was in this council that Lafayette first took his place as Major-General, and here began that friendship with Greene which, surviving ever fresh in the breast of the true-hearted Frenchman, made La Grange and Rue D’Anjou homes for me, when in 1827, a boy of sixteen, I went to him in the name of the friend whose ashes had been lying forty-one years in their unhonored grave.

Hamilton was sent to carry the resolves of the council to Congress, and bring back “the results of their opinion.”³ By three o’clock the active

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. V. p. 41.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 40.

young aide-de-camp was at the door of Congress Hall with Washington's letter in his hand. Congress read it, "adjourned for two hours," and, meeting again at five,

"*Resolved*, That Congress approve the plan of marching the army towards Hudson's River, and then that General Washington act as circumstances may require."¹

But on the next day, while they were busy with new resolves, came at half past one another panting express from the southward to tell them that "near two hundred sail of Mr. Howe's fleet [were] at anchor in the Chesapeake Bay."²

Here then all doubts were ended; the British general was resolved to have Philadelphia; and oh! what fear and trembling came over loyal men and women in the devoted city, and how hard the Tories found it to hide their joy and smile soberly as they trod with elastic step the streets that were, as they now felt sure, speedily to be filled with the representatives of their king. Congress knew what slippery ground it was standing on, and passed quick resolves for moving the public stores out of harm's way, for calling out the militia and strengthening the hands of Washington.

And Washington, when the tidings reached him, hastened his preparations; and putting his army in motion early next morning, was within "about five miles" of the city by nightfall. The next day was Sunday, and the early morning was fair; but it soon

¹ Journals of Congress, Thursday, August 21, 1777. ² Sparks's Correspondence of the Revolution, Vol. I. p. 429.

came on to rain, threatening to “spoil the stores and wet the army.”¹ But by seven the rain ceased, and Washington, drawing out his men in long array, as Clearchus lengthened his line of Greeks to multiply them in the eyes of the wondering Persians,² led them through the city, down Front Street and up Chestnut, and out by the road towards Wilmington, in quick continuous march without halting. “What an army!” said both Whig and Tory, as they saw them pass, the shorter men of each company in the front rank, the taller behind them; some in hunting-shirts, some in uniform, some in common clothes, some with their hats cocked, some without, and of those who did cock them, not all wearing them the same way, but each man with a green sprig, emblem of hope, in his hat, and each bearing his firelock with what, even to instructed eyes, had the air of skilful training.³ Each brigadier-general was at the head of his brigade, each division-general at the head of his division,—Greene first, with the gay Blodget and high-spirited Clark at his side. Washington, too, rode surrounded by his staff. The drums beat and the fifes played in the centre of each brigade, the inspiring trumpets sent out their clear voices from the heads of the columns, and mingling with the measured tread of man came the tramp of horses and the rumbling of artillery. Handkerchiefs waved towards them from the windows, loyal voices cheered and blessed them as they

¹ John Adams to his Wife. Letters, Vol. I. p. 253.

² Anabasis, II. 4.

³ Graydon’s Memoirs, Littell’s Ed., p. 291, and J. Adams, *ut sup.*

went by; some eyes, too, lowered upon them from behind half-drawn curtains, and when the martial array had passed slowly out of sight, some drew long breaths again, and felt as if such men with such a leader must conquer, while others, shaking their heads gravely, said, "There are but eleven thousand of them fit for service, and the British are fifteen."

Thus, hastening forward, Washington soon found himself as near the enemy as he cared to bring the main body of his forces without a more accurate knowledge of their position. Then with Greene and Lafayette and their aids he went forward to reconnoitre. Gray's Hill and Iron Hill were the only spots in the neighborhood of Elkton high enough to command an extensive view, and from these the American officers looked long and anxiously south-eastward, where a few tents, with the British flag waving haughtily over them, were the only signs of the invader that the eye could detect. How many were landed or how soon they would be prepared to push forward it was impossible to ascertain. Night came upon the little party as they turned their horses' heads homewards, and with it a sudden tempest of wind and rain. Washington sought with his companions the shelter of a neighboring farm-house. It was a gloomy evening, with the black storm without and the crowded little room within, clothes drenched with rain, and uppermost in every mind but Washington's the fear that some partisan of the enemy might secretly bring him

down upon them as he had been brought down upon Lee not a twelvemonth before. But the night passed away without alarm, though sleepless for Greene, and at daybreak they were all in the saddle again, glad to feel their horses under them and see an open road before them; and then, as he set spurs to his steed, Washington frankly avowed that he had made a lucky escape and done an imprudent thing.¹

Greene was next sent forward with Weedon, one of his brigadiers, to select a position for a camp. After a careful examination, he fixed upon the Cross-roads about six miles from Elk, with an open country behind to draw supplies and reinforcements from, and good skirmishing ground in front, from which it would be easy to harass and annoy the enemy while he was engaged in collecting the provisions and carts and horses that he needed for putting his army in motion. But before Greene's report could reach head-quarters a council of war had decided upon another position and another policy. An encampment was chosen right in the enemy's path,— Redclay Creek, about half-way between Wilmington and Christiana. "You cannot hold your ground," said Greene, "if they advance"; and when it was urged that, unless the way was blocked up, Sir William Howe would push straight on for Philadelphia, he replied, "Howe will not think of such a thing until he has beaten this army."²

¹ Lafayette's Memoirs, Vol. I. p. 21. Greene was Gordon's authority, as I learn by a letter of Gordon's to him,

² See Gordon, Vol. II. p. 494. April 5, 1784.

Meanwhile, great exertions were made to remove the stores with which the country abounded out of the enemy's reach, and Greene being in the advance behind Whiteclay Creek, most of this duty fell upon him.

"Enclosed," he writes to Washington on the 2d of September, "is a letter from Mr. Levi Hollingsworth, relative to the situation of the stores in that quarter. General Muhlenberg has marched with his detachment to cover the removal of the stores. If your Excellency thinks an additional force is necessary it shall be sent immediately. I wait further orders."

At this moment a new figure appears on the crowding scene, one that we shall often meet in the sequel, and even day by day, during the most active portion of the Southern campaigns.

"Mr. John Rudolph," says Hollingsworth's letter, "who was reconnoitring with Captain Lee yesterday, near the head of Elk, says they saw signs of a detachment of troops from the enemy having gone towards Nottingham. Captain Lee supposed them, by their track, to be about five hundred horse and foot."

It was a fit rising of the curtain upon the checkered career of the gallant young Virginian whom companionship in toil and danger was to unite in such close bonds of friendship with Greene, and who after many vicissitudes, and much honor and praise, was, forty-one years later, to end his days in obloquy and suffering under the roof of Greene's youngest daughter.¹

¹ At Dungeness, Cumberland Isl- room, with its unfinished walls of and, Ga. I remember well the large tabby-work in which he died, and the

“ Nothing new in camp since I wrote you last,” Greene writes to his wife on the 7th of September, from “ the camp near Wilmington, only that the army are advanced in line with me. ’Tis said this morning the enemy are coming out. A note, this moment received from Captain Lee, of the light-horse, favors the opinion. I am just going out upon a reconnoitring party. You must excuse a short letter.”

The position of the Americans, although carefully strengthened, was found, as Greene had foreseen, to be untenable, and upon the enemy’s advance they fell back to Chad’s Ford on the Brandywine.

“ The enemy marched out day before yesterday,” Greene writes to his wife on the 10th; “ they took post in a position to turn our right flank, the Christiana creek being on our left, the General thought our situation too dangerous to risk a battle, as the enemy refused to fight us in front. The General ordered the army to file off to the right, and take post at this place. A general action must take place in a few days. The army are in high spirits, and wish for action. . . . Here are some of the most distressing scenes imaginable,— the inhabitants generally desert their houses, furniture moving, cattle driving, and women and children travelling off on foot,— the country all resounds with the cries of the people,— the enemy plunders most amazingly. The militia of the country are not like the Jersey militia; fighting is a new thing with these, and many seem to have but a poor stomach for the business.

“ I am exceedingly fatigued. I was on horseback for little graveyard in a corner of an old cotton-field in which he was buried, within a few feet of my grandmother’s grave. The estate now belongs to my cousin, P. M. Nightingale, son of General Greene’s eldest daughter, Martha Washington.

upwards of thirty hours ; and never closed my eyes for near forty. Last night I was in hopes of a good night's rest ; but a dusty bed gave me asthma, and I had very little sleep the whole night ; but little as it was, I feel finely refreshed this morning."

This is not the first mention of asthma, as the reader will remember ; and henceforth in reading of Greene's laborious days, it should be borne in mind, that his nights were often passed in struggling with this painful disease.

The battle which all were anxiously awaiting was at hand. Early on the morning of the 11th, the enemy were seen approaching in force by the road to Chad's Ford, where, expecting the principal effort to be made, Washington had drawn up his main body, Wayne with Proctor's artillery in front, behind an intrenchment on the bank of the river, and Greene with his two brigades on the heights in their rear. The morning wore away in skirmishes and cannonading, Washington and Greene passing most of it together at headquarters, three quarters of a mile from the ford, waiting the moment of decided action. Towards eleven came a messenger from Sullivan, who was two miles higher up the stream in command of the right, saying that a large body of the enemy was marching for the upper fords by the great valley road. The force in front could not be the main body then ; and Howe was repeating the manœuvre which had given him the victory of Long Island. Washington instantly decided to cross

and attack the enemy on the opposite side of the ford. Orders were sent to Sullivan to cross at the same time, and fall upon the left wing. Greene immediately put his brigades in motion, and was already over the ford with the advance when another messenger came ; there was no large body on the great valley road, the whole British army was in front; Greene and Sullivan were rushing upon certain destruction. Greene was recalled, and Sullivan directed to wait further information and orders.

Two more anxious hours passed. Another messenger came, no longer with hearsays and conjectures, but an eyewitness, barely escaped with panting horse from the hands of the enemy. Howe's manœuvre had again succeeded, and Cornwallis was already on the left bank, pressing down towards the rear of the Americans. Sullivan was hurried off to meet him. Wayne was ordered to watch the ford, where the body that all the morning had been feigning an intention to pass would now, doubtless, try to pass in earnest. Greene was directed to hold himself in readiness to succor either Wayne or Sullivan, as circumstances might require. Washington remained with Greene, waiting for the first sounds of the conflict.

Another long watching and waiting. At last, between four and five, came a sudden burst of cannon and musketry from northwestward, borne over the fields and woods in the still autumn air. It was heard far off in distant Philadelphia, too,

muttering ominously at the windows of Congress Hall, and, booming heavily through the streets, brought men quickly together in anxious groups,¹ — the Tories by themselves, the Whigs, too, by themselves, looking at each other askance in silent expectation. They are at it, thought Washington and Greene, as the sounds came faster and faster, and in heavier surges, swelling at last into a continuous roar. Washington, pausing but a moment to give his orders to Greene, pushed forward by the nearest way, eager for the battle, his horse's head close upon the flank of his guide's horse, leaping the fences in his path, and calling out impatiently, "Push on, old man! push on!"

Greene, too, pressed forward with Weedon's brigade by the nearest road, hoping to come up in time for a share in the fray; his well-trained men chafing from the inaction of the morning, warmed by the roar from the battle-field, which grew louder and distincter at every step, and trying, as experience served them, to conjecture the fortunes of their countrymen from the eddying tide of sound. They had nearly four miles to go, but in forty-five minutes² the four miles were passed; and as they came up, Pinckney, one of Washington's aids, met them with instructions to halt Spottswood's and Stephens's regiments in a ploughed field on Sullivan's right, and form them there. For Sullivan, after a gallant resistance, had

¹ *Lafayette's Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 25.

² Greene to H. Marchant.

been defeated, and his broken ranks were scattered in the woods, and crowding through the road in the rear. It was too late to think of saving the day, but the army might yet be saved; and to Greene the difficult and dangerous task was assigned.

His two brigades — for Muhlenberg's joined him by another road — were all Virginians but the Pennsylvania regiment of Walter Stewart; and all of them carefully trained under the eyes of their leaders, the resolute Weedon and the impetuous Muhlenberg. Weedon, though but an innkeeper at Fredericksburg before the war, had so zealously "fanned the flame of sedition" till it broke out, and had taken so active a part in it when it did, that he was made a brigadier in the promotions of 1777, and, fortunately for both, was assigned to Greene's division, in the general distribution of the army. "My dear old friend," Greene's letters to him begin, and the friendship lasted through life. Muhlenberg, though a German Pennsylvanian by birth, had studied at Göttingen, had been ordained in London, and was pastor of a parish in Virginia at the opening of the war. How he passed from the pulpit to the head of a regiment I have already told; how gallantly he bore him in battle I shall now tell.

Without wasting time in vain efforts to check the tide of flight, Greene ordered his men to open their ranks as the fugitives came up, and close them again promptly when they were passed.

The artillery, too, was directed to keep up a constant fire, and hold back the enemy; and, thus marching and fighting, half a mile was slowly passed, when, coming to a narrow defile flanked by woods on both sides, and commanding the road by which the army was to retreat, he ordered Weedon to hold it with his own brigade, while he crossed over and held the road with Muhlenberg. Day was nearly spent when these arrangements were completed. The fog of the morning had melted away before the midday sun, but the evening vapors were now gathering, and the tree-tops all aglow with the rich hues of sunset. Still, thought Cornwallis, Greene's fated antagonist, as he urged forward his exulting battalions, there are three quarters of an hour of sunlight yet, full as much as we shall want to complete the rout of these rebels, and put, perhaps, an end to the war. And forward swept the bristling ranks, their guns and bayonets shining like silver, says one who saw them; on they swept, grenadiers, light infantry, Anspachers and Hessians, till the deadly fire from the American guns met them from the road in their front and the defile on their left flank, making their deep lines quiver and bend, as a corn-field quivers and bends to the whirlwind. But Cornwallis's stern eye was upon them, as, arrayed in the bright scarlet of his grade, with glittering epaulets and rich gold lace, firm and erect, he sat on his noble horse watching the ed-dying tide of battle; and, fearing the reproof of

that eye, they promptly reformed their ranks and rushed on again to the assault. And again the deadly tempest met them, and again they wavered and fell back. “To the bayonet! to the bayonet!” now resounded along the line, and the tall grenadiers smiled grimly under their black caps; and the high-trained light infantry and mustachioed Hessians filling up the gaps in their platoons, and throwing forward their keen bayonets, rushed with a mingled shout of hatred and indignation to the charge. But if any among them had leisure to look across the lessening interval between the two hostile fronts, thick strewn already with wounded and dying and dead, he would have seen the American line compact and firm; he would have seen at its head, on a large white horse, the stately form of Muhlenberg; he would have seen a keener and more prophetic eye than Cornwallis’s, sweeping over the field, and taking in the whole position at a glance. The Anspachers started with amazement as they looked, for in Muhlenberg they recognized one who had suddenly come among them ten years before at Göttingen; and in a wild, boyish freak, had served awhile in their ranks, leaving behind him deep impressions of an inflexible will and impetuous temper. “Hier kommt Teufel Piet!” (“Here comes Devil Pete!”) cried the old soldiers as they gazed, and knowing that where he led there would be need of all their strength, braced themselves firmly for the shock. And now bayonet met bayonet, thrust for thrust, man con-

tended with man, strong arm against strong arm, and skill was matched with skill. Charge followed charge in quick succession; the sun sank behind the trees, and still the battle raged. At last, borne down by numbers, Weedon was forced from his ground; but still maintaining a firm front, and with face towards the enemy, brought off his men in good order, to the road in Muhlenberg's rear. And then, too, Greene having accomplished his purpose, and given the broken divisions time to make sure their retreat, slowly drew off his own division, and, as twilight deepened into darkness, the weary combatants stayed their hands from the work of death. And as they slowly made their way along the road to Chester, an old man who had fought among the young men said sadly to his nearest companion, "Three hundred immortal souls are this day to us as though they had never been." "Yes, and we may join them to-morrow," answered the other; "but if I live, may I be hanged if I don't avenge their deaths, as far as one arm can do it."¹

¹ The history of this battle is not easy to unravel, as the authorities stand. I give them all together, — Gordon, Marshall, Johnson's Greene, Muhlenberg's Muhlenberg, Proceedings of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, September and December, 1846, Washington's Works, Vol. V., Greene MSS., Howe's Official Report in Almon's Remembrancer, Vol. V. p. 409, Lafayette's Memoirs, Vol. V. p. 1. I have chiefly followed, though with some hesitation, Johnson's account of the part taken by

Muhlenberg's brigade, knowing that he was assisted in the study of the battle by Colonel Pinckney, of Washington's staff. The story of Washington's having pointed out to Greene the position in the defile has, as far as I can ascertain, no other foundation than the order suggested by Sullivan, and conveyed by Pinckney, to halt in the "ploughed field." The "ploughed field" was the ground from which Greene's retreat began, and the pass, according to Gordon, was half a mile in its rear.

CHAPTER XX.

American Army not discouraged by their Defeat. — March to Germantown. — Sullivan unjustly blamed. — Weedon dissatisfied. — Greene and Washington. — Preparations for advancing towards the Enemy. — Advance to Warren's Tavern. — Battle prevented by a Storm. — Greene's Choice of a Position. — Marches and Counter-marches. — Howe deceives the Americans, and crosses the Schuylkill.

AND thus the Americans lost another battle, but they lost neither heart nor hope. By twelve o'clock the troops were "arraying behind Chester" for the night. Greene had brought off his gallant brigades in good order, and Washington, exhausted with the labor and excitement of the day and evening, was upon the point of going to bed, when he remembered that there was still a duty to perform. "Congress must be written to, gentlemen," he said to his staff, pausing at the door, "and one of you must do it, for I am too sleepy." Harrison, on whom the duty devolved, was too "distressed" to write it, and "put it upon" Pickering, the Adjutant-General. "I wrote and gave it to the General to read," writes Pickering. "He, with perfect composure, directed me to add a consolatory hope that another day would give a more fortunate result." "And that," said Picker-

ing to Mr. Sparks when he related the incident, "was the most important point of all." ¹

By four in the morning the letter was in the hands of John Hancock, who caught eagerly at the well-timed hope. "I am sorry," he writes, "for the unfortunate issue of the day, but from the troops keeping up their spirits, I flatter myself it will still be in our power to retrieve the loss of yesterday"; adding, "I have thought proper, in consequence of the intelligence received this morning, to call the Congress together at six o'clock." ²

At six o'clock Congress met, heard Washington's letter, and ordered it to be published; then at ten, and passed rapid resolutions for calling out the militia, and hastening forward the Continentals "to reinforce the army under General Washington"; and then again at five in the afternoon, and ordered "a proper boat or vessel to be provided" without delay, to convey the wounded Lafayette to New Jersey, and "that the Commissary-General of purchases be directed to purchase, on the most reasonable terms he can, thirty hogsheads of rum, and that the same be presented to the army, and distributed among the soldiers in such manner as the General shall direct, in compliment to the soldiers for their gallant behavior in the late battle of Brandywine." ³

¹ I am indebted to Mr. Sparks for this anecdote, which is also given in a letter from Pickering to Judge Peters, for the loan of which, and other important ones, I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Charles Eliot Norton.

The letter to Congress is given in Sparks's *Washington*, Vol. V. p. 57.

² Sparks's *Correspondence of the Revolution*, Vol. I. p. 434.

³ *Journals of Congress*, September 12, 1777.

Meanwhile, the defeated army was rapidly returning through Derby to the banks of the Schuylkill, Greene covering the rear with the gallant brigades, by whose aid he had covered it so effectually the day before. By the 13th, it was again in its late camping-ground of Germantown, soon to be its next battle-ground. There, and at Philadelphia, and throughout the country, there was much discussion about the causes of the defeat, Congress unjustly laying it at Sullivan's door, and even carrying its injustice so far as to order his immediate recall from the army, and an official investigation of his conduct. But Washington, who judged more wisely, remonstrated with them against a measure which was to deprive him of the services of a valuable officer, when he was rather in need of having new generals sent him, than prepared to have an old and approved one taken away.¹ Congress yielded,—it was no time to dispute Washington's opinions,—and when, at the first practicable moment, the official investigation was made, Sullivan was justly exonerated from all blame.² Time has confirmed the decision. The conflicting intelligence of the 11th, like the want of intelligence at Long Island the year before, was the fault, not of the generals, but of the means at their command. Steuben was but just on his way

¹ Sparks's Washington, Vol. V. p. 61.

² *Ut sup.* 62. For a full vindication of General Sullivan on this and other occasions, see Mr. T. C. Am-

ory's able and satisfactory paper in the Historical Magazine for December, 1866, and also in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society for 1866-67, p. 380.

from Paris to Marseilles, where the Flamand was waiting to take him to America, and till Steuben came, many of the springs and wheels without which an army cannot act either promptly or harmoniously were wanting.

But if there was much of questioning as to who had lost the day, there could be none as to who had saved the army. In that "hour and a quarter" "of hot action," Greene had "confessedly saved the park of artillery, and indeed the army, from the fatal effects of a disagreeable rout";¹ and now his officers looked for a public acknowledgment of the important service in general orders. But no such acknowledgment came, and Weedon remonstrated with Greene, and Greene, according to one version of the story, with Washington, who replied, "You, sir, are considered my favorite officer: Weedon's brigade, like myself, are Virginians; should I applaud them for their achievement under your command, I shall be charged with partiality; jealousy will be excited, and the service injured." Greene saw that Washington was right, and desisted. According to the other version, he refused, from the first, to carry the complaint to Washington, saying, "Our General has enough to distress him; let us not add to his perplexities. The whole army admits the services you rendered; let us rest satisfied with the consciousness of it." And that this is the true version cannot be questioned, without calling in question the truth of what Greene

¹ Greene to Colonel Lee, February 18, 1782.

wrote to Colonel Lee in the letter from which I just now quoted ; for in that letter, written to meet some of Lee's complaints of unrecognized services, after showing them to be altogether unfounded, he adds :—

“ How different was my situation in the Northern army ! I fought hard at Harlem. I was in the action at Trenton and Princeton. I covered the retreat at Brandywine, and was upwards of an hour and a quarter in a hot action, and confessedly saved the park of artillery, and indeed the army, from the fatal effects of a disagreeable rout ; and yet, in all those actions, I never had the honor to have my name mentioned to the public, either as being with the army, or having done the least thing, notwithstanding I was a general officer. At Germantown, I was evidently disgraced, though I think, if ever I merited anything, it was for my exertions on that day. I have been concerned in many other lesser services, which have all been passed over in silence. *But I never murmured or complained*, notwithstanding I was held in indignation for faults and misfortunes I had no direction of.”¹

It was by no means Washington's intention to let Sir William Howe get possession of Philadelphia even now without fighting for it, or hold it tranquilly if he should succeed in getting it. It was a busy time in the American camp, where the men were furbishing up their arms and preparing

¹ For first version see Caldwell's Life of Greene, p. 58, who evidently took up a camp rumor for an authentic anecdote. For second, Johnson's Greene, Vol. I. p. 77. Greene's letter to Lee was first published by H. Lee (son of the Colonel), in his very clever, but very angry, and therefore not always trustworthy, “ Campaign of 1781.” Appendix, XVIII.

for another battle; a busy time in Philadelphia, where good Whigs were packing up for a sudden removal, and commissary officers hurrying off the public stores to places of safety, and Congress pressing its business, and, as an urgent part of it, sending off the principal Quakers,—“six wagons of them with a guard,”—to Virginia, in the hope of checking the readiness which the brotherhood had so freely manifested to keep up a treasonable correspondence with the enemy; a busy time on the high ways, “no end to chaises, coaches, and wagons with fugitives”; a busy time in the villages, where “one message followed another that the loss of the American army was very serious,” and “the British army already near the city,” every village fancying that it “would be the scene of their march, or even the battle-field,” and the pious Christian, who saw God’s finger in all this trouble, crying, solemnly, “Now, Pennsylvania, prepare to meet the Lord your God!” but busiest time of all, at head-quarters in Germantown, towards which all eyes were turned with anxious expectation. Cold weather was at hand, and the troops needed blankets and shoes.¹ There was a widespread disaffection throughout the country, making it difficult to obtain provisions or information, and without them, the army could not be

¹ The proof of these statements is so abundant in Washington’s Letters, that you have only to turn over the pages of the fifth volume to find them repeated in various forms.

See also extracts from a very curious Journal of H. N. Muhlenberg, in the Life of General Muhlenberg, p. 341 *et seq.*

moved. The British fleet would soon be trying to force its way up the Delaware, and the defences, long before begun, must be completed and strengthened. The British army would soon be trying to reach the Schuylkill, and there were several fords to fortify and guard.

Washington's pen ran rapidly over quires of paper; Greene's pen was tasked for orders and instructions. There was work, also, for both of them, out of doors as well as within, and work for the men too, who were set at once to clean their guns, and put up their fresh distribution of cartridges,—forty apiece. On the 14th, they turned their faces southward again towards the enemy, marching first a few miles up the left bank of the Schuylkill to Levering's Ford. "O for a little more discipline, both in officers and men," thought Pickering, as he saw them, instead of marching directly into the water without breaking their ranks, halt and loiter on the bank, some stripping off shoes and stockings, some their breeches too, and officers even quitting their platoons to secure a canoe or borrow a horse. "It was a pleasant day," wrote the rigorous adjutant in his daily record, "and had the men marched directly over by platoons, without stripping, no harm could have ensued, their clothes would have been dried by night on their march, and the bottom would not have hurt their feet." Once over the Schuylkill, Washington pressed forward by the Lancaster road to get be-

tween the enemy and Swede's Ford. On the 15th, he reached the Warren Tavern.¹

On the next morning, about 9 o'clock, the scouts brought word that the enemy was advancing to offer battle. Detachments were instantly sent forward to support the advance guard, and help them hold the British in check while the line was forming, for, although it was not the ground Washington had intended to fight upon, he was both willing and ready to fight.² The right was quickly arrayed for action, Washington sending forward Pickering, Adjutant-General, to assist in forming the troops. But behind the centre and left was a valley of soft, wet ground, impassable for artillery, except in that part of it which lay in the rear of Greene's division, "where there was a firm road." Greene was the first to observe it, and, riding up to Washington, asked him if he meant to have the troops fight in that position. When Pickering returned from the right, the centre was still unformed, and a number of officers were gathered round Washington in consultation. "Pressing his horse forward to learn the object," he found that they were still debating whether to "receive the British where they were, or cross the valley and make their stand on the high ground on the other side of it." Meanwhile the sounds of musketry began to come faster and faster from the front, where Wayne, with the advanced guard, was already en-

¹ Marshall, Vol. I. p. 160. Sparks's Washington, Vol. V. p. 62. Pickering's Diary, MSS.

² Marshall, *ut sup.*

gaged with the enemy, and, as the approaching din plainly showed, falling back upon the main body for support. The consultation still continued. "Sir," said Pickering, addressing himself directly to Washington, "the advancing of the British is manifest by the reports of the musketry. The order of battle is not completed. If we are to fight the enemy on this ground, the troops ought to be immediately arranged. If we are to take the high ground on the other side of the valley, we ought to march immediately, or the enemy may fall upon us in the midst of our movement. Pray, Sir, decide." "Let us move," said Washington; and Greene was ordered to draw up the troops in the new position.

By this time the sky was overcast, and the patterning of rain began to mingle with the sounds of the approaching conflict, gradually deepening from shower to shower into a continuous flood. The British came to a halt; neither side was able to use its cannon, much less its muskets. At night-fall the Americans filed off on the road to Yellow Springs, moving slowly and painfully over the miry ground, and under the drenching rain as it dashed slant upon them, borne furiously hither and thither by a sharp, bleak wind. When they reached their halting-place, they had to rest themselves as best they could on the streaming earth, their tents being with the baggage-train in the rear.¹

¹ Most of the details of this paragraph I have drawn from the Pickering manuscripts in the possession of Mr. Octavius Pickering, of Cam-

But they were not to rest long, for on examining their arms it was found that their ill-protected guns were unfit for use, and their worse-protected ammunition, which had been distributed at forty rounds a man, was water-soaked in their worthless cartouch-boxes. Sorely disappointed, and with a heavy heart, Washington again put his weary battalions in motion towards Warwick Furnace, where the strong ground would, he hoped, protect him while his men were cleaning and repairing their arms, and a fresh supply of ammunition was brought up from the magazines.¹ Greene was sent forward with Tilghman, one of Washington's aids, to choose a position, and chose one on the range of mountains that, extending from Valley Forge to the Yellow Springs, — "difficult of access," easy of descent, well suited for skirmishes and partial actions, but impossible to force a general engagement upon, — offered most of the same advantages of ground which had enabled the American general to baffle all the manœuvres of his adversary in June and July. And thus, with Wayne close in the enemy's rear, and the main army within striking distance of his flank, Greene thought that a crippling blow might be dealt if Howe should attempt to cross

bridge, who kindly permitted me to have copies made of everything in them which bore upon my subject. The cold wind is spoken of in Mühlenberg's Journal. I suppose the "large piece of water" mentioned by Gordon (Vol. II. p.

515) to be the wet valley mentioned by Pickering, which with such a rain would soon become a pond, and as a pond be remembered by many of the actors.

¹ Sparks's Washington, Vol. V. p. 66.

the Schuylkill, and a safe retreat secured in case of disaster.¹

But while Greene was making his study of the ground, a council of war was deciding to act by the front, and unfortunately, if we are to judge by the result on both occasions. Washington again accepted their decision. That, as a military man, he approved of Greene's plan it would be wronging him to doubt; but Greene's enemies, who were also his enemies, were at this time accusing Greene of a willingness to sacrifice Philadelphia from a dread of southern influence,² and Washington seems to have felt that, whatever his military judgment might dictate, he must again give way to public opinion. In this sentiment Greene did not concur, neither did he approve of submitting every question to the decision of a council of war,—a system which betrayed, as he thought, something like a want of personal decision. We shall come upon an open expression of this thought in a few moments, and by and by, when we tell the story of his great campaign of '81, we shall see how strictly he lived up to the idea of independent action which he seems to have already formed.

In accordance, then, with the opinion of the council, Wayne was left in the rear, where he soon after met with that bloody disaster, the remembrance of which has come down to us as the massa-

¹ Gordon, from Greene's *Memo-
randa*, Vol. II. p. 516. Greene's first
plan of acting on the flank before the
battle of Brandywine was known at

the time, as appears from Graydon,
p. 292.

² Graydon, p. 292.

cre of Paoli. Howe for once was fully awake, resolved to have Philadelphia by force or by skill, cost what it might of toil or blood. And thus Washington, too, was kept in constant motion. On the 18th, the Americans were at Warwick ; on the 19th, at Fatland Ford, on the left bank of the Schuylkill, which even at Parker's Ford, several miles higher up, where they crossed, was breast high.¹ "His Excellency General Washington was with the troops who passed us here to the Perkiomen," says Muhlenberg's diary for Friday, September 19th. "The procession lasted the whole night, and we had all kinds of visits from officers wet to the breast, who had to march in that condition the cold, damp night through, and to bear hunger and thirst at the same time. This," he adds, "robs them of courage and health, and instead of prayers we hear from most, the national evil, curses." But the good man offered up sincere and earnest prayers for them.

The two armies were now near each other, front to front almost, with the swollen Schuylkill flowing rapidly between. The British tents could be seen from Providence "with a telescope," and the good old Whig who tells us so seems to have shuddered as he looked out upon them from his once peaceful home. His "weaker vessels baked bread twice" during the day, "and distributed all the food they had to the sick and ailing. In the evening a nurse,

¹ Sparks's Washington, Vol. V. p. 65. Muhlenberg's Journal, Life of Muhlenberg, p. 342.

with three English children of a fugitive family of consequence, from Philadelphia, arrived, and could get no farther, as it was night. They begged for lodging, which we granted, as good or bad as we had it. ‘Give shelter willingly’ (Romans xii. 13),¹ particularly to children who are yet saints. There were also two negroes, servants of the English family,² who wished to one another in secret that the British might be victorious, as then all negro slaves would be free; and this opinion is said to be general among all negroes in America.”³

Instructive glimpses these into the interior of a cottage between two hostile armies, whom it is sometimes better to see march by from the cottager’s door, with trembling women and children around you, than from the strategian’s closet with nothing but maps and muster-rolls to remind you that you are all children of the same Father.

On the 17th, the venerable pastor had written:—

“Here am I old, worn out, with a sick wife subject to hysterical paroxysms, have with me two daughters, two sons’ wives with two infant children, and my son’s parents-in-law, and expect every day and hour that a British division will cross the Schuylkill and treat us without distinction, as the providence of God has ordered and will allow. We cannot well fly, for there is no place safe. Where the two armies do not reach there are thieves, robbers, and murderers, who take advantage of the present time and condition.”

¹ The quotation is from Luther’s version, “*Herberget gerne.*” The English version reads, “Given to hospitality.”

² Muhlenberg, the reader will remember, was a German American, and therefore calls these English.

³ Muhlenberg’s Diary, *ut sup.*

The American army seemed to bring hope with them ; but on the 21st, Sunday, in the afternoon, the British were said to be in motion again, likely, Muhlenberg was told, “ to come out upon the great road at our house and attack the American army. We were advised to fly, as a battle might take place and our house be plundered or burned.” Some of the family resolved to go to New Hanover, and wanted him to go with them. He tried to persuade his wife to go and “ leave [him] behind alone. She was not to be persuaded, but would rather live, suffer, and die with me in Providence.”

Meanwhile, Howe was manoeuvring to get possession of the lower fords, and through them of the road to Philadelphia, by alarming Washington for the safety of his stores at Reading. It was for this that his army was in motion, pushing apparently up the great valley road towards the upper fords. Washington resolved to throw himself in his front. “ At twelve o’clock at night the advance of the American army, with many field-pieces, came past, and some of them knocked at our door, as if to break it in. Our people rose, asked them what they wanted, and were answered, ‘ Fire.’ A German captain, however, drove them off.”

The British general, meantime, by a rapid counter-march, had seized Fatland’s and Gordon’s Fords, and begun to cross over to the left bank. The road to Philadelphia was now open. When the unwelcome news reached head-quarters, “ every one,” says Gordon, “ was astonished.”

“On one of these dreary nights,” writes Pickering, “as the army marched upwards on the eastern side of the Schuylkill, in its rear I fell in with General Greene. We descended the bank of Perkiomen Creek together, and while our horses were drinking, I said to him: ‘General Greene, before I came to the army, I entertained an exalted opinion of General Washington’s military talents, but I have since seen nothing to enhance it.’ I did not venture to say it was sensibly lowered, though that was the fact; and so Greene understood me, for he instantly answered in these words precisely: ‘Why, the General does want decision; for my part, I decide in a moment.’”

That Greene did decide, after a careful examination of facts, with marvellous promptitude, is asserted by all who knew him, and proved by all his independent acts. Still, I could wish that he had never permitted himself to call Washington’s decision in question; for the hereditary reverence I have been trained up in for that wonderful man, and which Greene’s precept and example have made traditional in his family, renders it difficult for me to enter into the feelings of those who, acting with him, and loving and revering him, and putting full faith in his civic talents, still permitted themselves — as Hamilton and Pickering and Steuben are known to have done — to doubt his military talents. That Greene’s was but a passing doubt, extending to a single quality, and arising

¹ Gordon, Vol. II. p. 518.

from the cause already mentioned, will plainly appear from the sequel.¹

Nothing but a battle could now save the city. Congress had already withdrawn with the intention of reassembling at Lancaster, although they afterwards decided to remove to Yorktown ;² and wisely, before they separated, they strengthened Washington's hands by an important resolve.³ Still, a battle was looked for, especially by Pennsylvanians, upon whom the brunt of these destructive marches and countermarches fell. But Washington now felt that he must wait a few days longer, no matter what the public thought or said, for reinforcements were on their march, and his troops needed rest, and more especially shoes and blankets. When next he fought he was determined to come strong-handed to the conflict. Meanwhile, he drew back a few miles farther up the country, and pitched his camp at Pennibecker's mill on Perkiomen Creek.

¹ Pickering Papers and Pickering to Peters, MSS. I have been counselled not to repeat this anecdote; but, as I interpret the historian's duty, the suppression of a characteristic fact is a practical falsehood. Greene saw faults in Washington, but saw too that they were outbalanced by his virtues. Lafayette tells us that Wash-

ington's "reluctance to change opinion" led him to expose himself and his suite to a serious danger. Did Lafayette look up to him with any the less reverence?

² Sparks's Correspondence of the Revolution, Vol. I. p. 436.

³ Journals, October 17, 1777.

CHAPTER XXI.

Howe in Philadelphia. — Straitened for Provisions. — Washington's Preparations for the Defence of the Delaware. — Council of War oppose a Battle. — Further Intelligence. — Battle decided upon. — Advance of the Army and Battle of Germantown.

HOWE entered Philadelphia on the 26th of September amid the exultations of the Tories, and the deep dejection of the few Whigs whom chance or necessity had detained there. This, however, was only a first step, and it had cost him a battle and thirty days' marching, though the distance from his landing-place at Elkton was only sixty miles. Two miles a day, with fighting on the road, and starvation at the end of it, did not look like putting down the rebellion this campaign. But the British and their partisans talked boldly of the victories they had already won, and promised themselves still greater. There was, however, a second step to take, without which it were better the first had never been taken. Without the command of the river there could be no direct communication with the fleet, and consequently no sure base of supplies. Provisions had long been dear in Philadelphia, especially West India and European articles ; but immediately after the British entered it, articles of daily use rose to prices that few could

continue to pay long without exhausting their resources.¹ To shut out the British fleet from going freely up and down the river, and thus starve Howe into evacuation, was one of Washington's first aims, and the principal means of accomplishing it were *chevaux-de-frises* in the channel, supported by galleys, frigates, and two forts,—Fort Mifflin on Fort Island, and Fort Mercer at Red Bank on the Jersey shore. How long, how skilfully, and how gallantly the passage of the river was defended we shall see a little further on; for some familiar names are awaiting us there, and some of the glory of those brave days is ours.

But the preparations of annoyance did not end here. Reinforcements were coming in from the North and from Virginia, and with their aid a direct blow might be struck at the royal army itself before it could settle contentedly down in its winter quarters. Accordingly, on the 28th, two days after the occupation of the city by the British, a council of war was assembled to decide whether it would be better to wait for these reinforcements, or to venture an immediate attack with the eight thousand continentals and three thousand militia, already in camp, upon the eight thousand British and German regulars who held Philadelphia. Greene, with all of the major-generals and five of the brigadiers, was for deferring the attack, but taking, at the same time, some strong position nearer the

¹ J. Adams's letters to his wife for the first, and Reed's Life of President Reed for the second.

city, from whence they might advance or retreat, as circumstances required. Wayne, with five other brigadiers, was for attacking at once. Washington accepted the decision of the majority, and on the 30th the army moved forward by the Skippack road to within sixteen miles of Germantown, where a part of the enemy's forces lay. The Americans kept vigilant guard in their new camp, and constantly sent out light parties for intelligence. One of the early fruits of this watchfulness was two interrupted letters, from which it was ascertained that Sir William Howe "had detached a part of his force against Billingsport and the forts on the Delaware."¹ A second council was promptly called. All agreed in voting an immediate attack, and the battle of Germantown, in a political sense, at least, one of the most important battles of the Revolution, was the immediate consequence of that vote.

The British position seemed to invite attack. Part of their forces, as we have seen, had been detached to act against the defences of the Delaware, part had been stationed in Philadelphia, and a still larger part lay at Germantown, now almost a suburb of the metropolis, but then a village of a single street, two miles in length, and four miles nearer than the city to the American camp.² Here the main body of the British were encamped, their centre near the centre of the village, and at right angles with it, and their wings stretching out into the country in the midst of gardens and orchards,

¹ Sparks's Washington, Vol. V. p. 78.

² Marshall, Vol. I. p. 167.

and covered in front by the German chasseurs on their left, and Simcoe's Queen's Rangers on their right. Their pickets were at Mount Airy, two miles farther up the main road.

Besides this main road, there were two other roads to the village,—the Lime-kiln road, leading into the centre of the camp, nearly at an angle of forty-five degrees, and the old York road, which led to the rear of the camp by a similar angle with the Lime-kiln. Both of these roads were on the British right. On their left, which was strengthened by Wissahickon Creek, a small stream running for some distance almost parallel with the village, and then eastward to empty into the Schuylkill, there was still another road, generally known as the Ridge road, which, crossing the creek not far from its mouth, led directly in upon the German troops who were posted there, and leaned, although they did not absolutely rest upon the Schuylkill. To strike the British, front, flank, and rear, and thus rendering it impossible for one body to carry succor to another, crush them, as it were, by four simultaneous blows, the American army was divided into four columns, each of which was to act by a separate road.

Sullivan led the right wing, which was to take the enemy in front by the main road; Greene the left, which was to come in upon their right by the Lime-kiln road, while the attacks upon their rear were intrusted to the Pennsylvania militia, under Armstrong, by the Ridge road, and the Maryland

and Jersey militia, under Smallwood and Forman, by the old York road. Light parties were to scour the roads and fields in front, and keep open the communications between the different corps as the army advanced.

About seven¹ in the evening of the 3d of October the Americans broke up from their encampment at Metuchen Hill on Skippack Creek, and set out upon their night march of sixteen miles. The country through which they were to pass was irregular, dotted with woods, orchards, and enclosed fields, with here and there a valley, and in some places a marsh or a small watercourse. The air was heavy with lowland vapors, through which the stars twinkled fitfully, and the breath of the night-wind was frosty and chill. But officers and men were well broken in to night marches; and what were walls that could be thrown down and ditches that could be leaped, to mire knee deep and rivers breast high? and what the still mist to a pelting rain? On then they marched, with the heavy tread of twenty thousand feet, and heavier rumbling of cannon and ammunition wagons; the veterans, strong by their recollections of the past, and the newcomers emulous of the name of veterans.

Sullivan's advance was the first on the ground, and as they descended into the valley near Mount Airy, the sun rose with the momentary promise of a clear day, but was presently lost again in a fog. The landscape, too, was almost lost, close wrapped

¹ Washington says 7, — Sparks, Vol. V. p. 78. Sullivan, 9, — Id. 464. Pickering's MS. Diary, — "about 8."

in thick vapors, which, opening from time to time, gave short glimpses of objects forty yards distant, and suddenly closing in again, dense and dark, left the mind bewildered and the eye aching with the effort to recover what it had seen. Still Sullivan pressed on, came upon the British outposts by surprise, drove them in, and still advancing and fighting, for the British rallied at every fence and new troops came up to their support, made sure his advance by the main road, with his troops well in hand, and everything, like the sunrise just before, bidding fair for a propitious day. And now, he thought, it is time to hear from Greene; and not hearing from him, and fearing for his left flank, he ordered Wayne to form on the east of the road, on ground assigned to Greene in the original plan of attack.

In that plan it had been expected that the whole army would be upon the ground by daylight; but the difficulties of the road retarded Sullivan's advance till sunrise, and Greene's, with his additional two miles, and a mistake of his guide,¹ some time longer. There would appear also to have been some mistake in estimating the distances, involving, of course, a corresponding mistake in fixing the time for bringing the different columns into action. Thus, it was about half an hour after Sullivan's attack began when Greene came upon the ground, advancing along the Lime-kiln road, with Stephen's brigade on the west of it, Scott's, Muhlenberg's, and

¹ Pickering's Diary and his letter in North American Review, Vol. XXIII. p. 425.

McDougal's on the east. And here, Sullivan's change in the original plan of attack, though well meant, and apparently called for by the circumstances, wrought a fatal injury, for as Stephen advanced, he found Wayne's corps in his front, where he had looked only for the enemy, and mistaking it for the enemy, fired upon it. Wayne's troops, too, equally surprised to find themselves attacked from their rear were thrown into a momentary confusion, and before the error could be corrected and order restored, Stephen's division was irretrievably separated from Greene's, and a dangerous gap made in the American line.

Still Greene pushed on at the head of his division, Muhlenberg leading his own gallant brigade which had made the great stand at the Brandywine, Scott and McDougal leading theirs; the air ringing the while with the sounds of the conflict on the right,— sounds which a soldier, trying to recall them when the battle was over, likened to “the crackling of thorns under a pot, and incessant peals of thunder.”¹ The first force they met was a body of light infantry, and driving it before them, and sweeping resistlessly on, in a few moments they found themselves in front of the British right, all drawn up, and ready to receive them. In front of them, I say, but still almost without seeing them, for the fog was so thick that forty yards was the farthest they could see, and often not farther than twenty, and the hostile line, magnified by the mist,

¹ Letter of a soldier in the Newport Gazette.

must have looked, as all indistinct objects do, larger and stronger than it really was. But there was the flash from the enemy's guns to guide them, and by that flash they aimed their own, and firing rapidly volley upon volley, soon made them waver and shrink. Then forward came Muhlenberg, with the bayonet, dashing upon them like a wave upon a quivering wreck, and driving them sheer through the camp into the village. Never before had those low, steep-roofed stone houses looked down from their pent-eaves or peered out from under their ponderous cornices upon such a scene. Evil was the hour when their builders built their walls of stone, and, making them strong against cold and heat, made them fatally strong against their friends. For the British soldiers, well trained and prompt in danger, threw themselves into them all through the village, carrying even their light field-pieces into the chambers, and pouring down hurtling showers of cannon-balls and musket-balls from the windows. Then might you have seen that the chief want of our brave fellows was the want of discipline, and that impassive bearing which discipline gives. For as the combat deepened, and men began to fall, you would see two, and often five or even six, quit their places in the ranks to help off a wounded comrade, dropping and losing their own arms by the way. Many of these would not return to the line at all, and often the wounded man would die before they reached the surgeon. Officers, too, were frequently found out of their places, and separated

from their men at the very moment when their familiar voices were most needed to guide them, and their familiar faces to cheer them.¹

And now, too, the air grew darker as the smoke of the guns, and the still denser smoke of stubble and hay, which the enemy had set fire to, to increase the confusion, mingled with the fog; all hanging over the battle-field in sulphurous folds, which there was no wind to blow aside. And from it came shouts and huzzas, and shrieks and groans, and reverberations of cannon, and the crackling of musketry; and under it the fierce work still went on, the deadly thrust and clash of bayonet, the deadly struggle hand to hand, eyes glaring mortal hate into eyes they had never seen before, and foot sternly pressed on palpitating limbs and bespattering human blood. Look well to it, King George! think well of it under the gilded canopy of your royal closet! for although none of these fiendish sounds can reach you there now, the time will surely come when they shall knock dolefully at your door till Reason deserts her seat, and the man at whose will all these brothers of God's household are shedding each other's blood so freely becomes a drivelling idiot.

The left wing then was in the village at the market-place, and though reduced in numbers by Stephen's inability to extricate his division from its entanglement with Wayne — for Stephen, brave and tried officer hitherto, had used his canteen too freely that raw morning — was still driving the enemy and mak-

¹ Pickering's Diary.

ing prisoners. Sullivan, too, was pressing forward, and Wayne coming gallantly on, when — as some say — a light-horseman called out abruptly, “We are surrounded,” and Sullivan’s men, struck with sudden panic, turned and fled. Others say that their ammunition was exhausted, others that nobody knew why or how the alarm began. Wayne’s men, too, suddenly paused, and presently began to fall back. Washington, as he saw them hurry by, pointing to their empty cartouch-boxes, saw that the day was lost, felt that they were running from victory.

Then the British left, wheeling promptly round, came back to the support of their right, and Greene found himself between two fires. It was a critical moment; everything looking strange and unintelligible through the fog; aids riding hither and thither with orders, but stopped at every step by the orchard-walls and garden-walls which their jaded horses were no longer able to leap; the fire on the right suddenly checked, and the sounds of conflict passing away rapidly up the road as if the battle had suddenly come to an end. But it was the moment that strong men love; and Greene was never stronger, firmer, or more self-possessed than then. The day was lost, but his division might, must be saved. Scott’s brigade and McDougal’s, less advanced than Muhlenberg’s, were promptly concentrated upon the line of retreat. But Muhlenberg’s was in the very midst of the enemy, and nothing but desperate efforts in the men, and consummate coolness in the officers, could save them.

Their hundred and ten prisoners were lost again. Mathews, who, leading the advance, was in the thickest of the conflict, was surrounded and forced to yield, though not till nearly all his men had been killed or wounded, and he himself disabled by bayonet-stabs. But it was in vain that the British, exultant now, and confident of victory, pressed on ; the Americans had withstood as impetuous a charge as this at the Brandywine, and come off unbroken, and unbroken they came off this dark morning too ; Greene carefully gathering them in hand as they fell back, and as soon as they were extricated from the enemy, and set forward on their road campward, placing himself in the rear to bring up the retreat. Not one of his cannon was lost. Even a single piece, that had been dismounted, was put into a wagon and brought safely away. And to divert the enemy's attention, and prevent them from getting into his front, he divided his forces at a fork in the road, sending part of them forward by one road and taking the other himself with the rest.

Cornwallis had now joined the pursuers with fresh troops, and they pressed on with new vigor. Pulaski's cavalry, who formed a rear-guard, shrinking from their fire, rode over the second division, which broke and scattered, mistaking them for the enemy's dragoons. It seemed for a moment as if the artillery must be lost. To allay the confusion and save it, Greene ordered the men to lay hold of each other's hands, and thus form a firm line again. The balls, all this time, were whistling round him,

and his officers looked anxiously at his reckless exposure of his person. But he well knew where men turn for encouragement in danger, and what a strengthening power there is in a firm brow and cheerful countenance. Queues and curls were the head-dress of the day. A musket-ball struck off Captain's Burnet's queue as he was riding at the General's side. "Burnet," said Greene, "you had better jump down, if you have time, and pick up your queue." "And your curl, too, General," answered Burnet, observing that another ball had just taken off one of his commander's curls. Greene laughed, and all held on their way, lighter-hearted and more cheerful for the well-timed jest. And at last Cornwallis, unable to get within striking distance, and suffering, without gaining ground, from the American artillery, which every now and then sent a sharp volley into his ranks, gave over the pursuit, and drew off his men. It had continued nearly five miles from the battle-field, and fifteen more heavy miles were passed before the weary army, vanquished again, but not yet disheartened, regained the encampment from whence it had set forth a few short days before with so much hope, and so many comrades, alas! who were never to return to it again.

¹ The authorities for the battle of Germantown have been collected and studied by Sparks with his usual diligence. I have also consulted Gordon, who drew from original sources; Marshall, who was present, Pickering's letter in the *North American Review*, Vol. XXIII. p. 425, his manuscript Diary; and, among secondary authorities, Johnson's *Greene* and Muhlenberg's *Muhlenberg*. The only mention of the battle in Greene's papers is in a letter to Henry Marchant, and the one to Henry Lee, already quoted.

C H A P T E R X X I I .

Beginning of the Cabal against Washington. — Forts on the Delaware. — Christopher Greene. — Operations on both Sides of the Delaware. — Attack of Red Bank. — Defeat and Death of Donop. — Rejoicings of the Americans. — Colonel Greene thanked by Congress and congratulated by Washington and General Greene. — Washington anxious to attack the British. — Movements for the Support of Fort Mifflin. — Attack and Fall of Fort Mifflin.

ANOTHER defeat following close upon the defeat of the Brandywine, close upon toilsome marches and countermarches, close upon the loss of Philadelphia! And the Northern army, meanwhile was boldly breasting the great wave of invasion, and fighting decisive battles, and preparing to strike the last crushing blow. Congressmen were very indignant that Washington and his advisers should blunder so, and display so little enterprise; and among these lay critics were John Adams, who, in September, professed himself "sick of Fabian systems in all quarters";¹ and, in October, rejoiced "that the glory of turning the tide of arms was not immediately due to the Commander-in-chief";² and James Lovell, who wrote in November, "our affairs are Fabiused into a very disagreeable posture," and "you will be astonished

¹ Letters to his Wife, Vol. I. p. 265.

² Ibid., Vol. II. p. 14.

when you come to know accurately what numbers have at one time and another been collected near Philadelphia to wear out stockings, shoes, and breeches.”¹ Generals, too, shook their heads gravely, Pennsylvania generals in particular, who thought that Philadelphia ought to be preserved at all hazards. Foremost among these was Mifflin, who, neglecting his duties as Quartermaster-General,² had retired to Reading in disgust at Washington’s refusal the summer before to march directly to Philadelphia, instead of waiting to know whither Howe was going.³ “According to him, the ear of the Commander-in-chief was exclusively possessed by Greene”; “neither the most wise, the most brave, nor most patriotic of counsellors.”⁴ Even Wayne, — though in a different spirit, — the spirit of Reed in December, 1776, not the spirit of Mifflin or Conway at any time, — complained to Gates of the loss of Fort Mifflin and of Washington’s “listening too much to some counsel.”⁵

And thus from Congress and from camp eyes were turned hopefully towards Gates, and letters, some with and some without the writer’s name, went northward to encourage the fortunate general in drawing flattering comparisons between himself and the Commander-in-chief. All through the last months of the year this unholy spirit was at work,

¹ Letter to Gates. — York, November 27, 1777. Gates papers, N. Y. H. Society.

General.” — To President of Congress, December 23, 1777.

² Greene MSS. Letters of February 7, 1778.

³ Sparks, Vol. V. 198. “Since the month of July we have had no assistance from the Quartermaster-

⁴ Graydon, p. 299.

⁵ Gates Papers.

active and hopeful in Congress, but never very hopeful in camp, and hated wherever seen in the country. How it was conceived in wounded vanity, how it was fostered by untimely jealousies, how it grew for a while in obscurity, and how it shrunk and melted away in the light, I shall presently tell as fully as my materials will allow; for Washington's and Greene's names are so blended in it that it belongs equally to the story of both. Meanwhile it behooves us, as we follow Greene's steps through the remainder of this anxious year, to keep our eyes upon this deepening cloud, and remember with what a dark menace it hung upon an horizon already so dark.

Disappointed, though not disheartened, by the result of his bold attack upon the British forces at Germantown, Washington now directed his attention more anxiously to the defences of the Delaware. Howe, it was well known, already found it difficult to feed his army in the half-beleaguered city,¹ and could the forts hold out a few weeks longer, till cold weather and ice came to their aid, he might be compelled to return ignominiously to his ships, or fight his way, at great peril, through the Jerseys to New York. These forts, as we have already seen, were Fort Mercer at Red Bank on the Jersey shore, and Fort Mifflin on Great Mud or Fort Island in the Delaware; both of them about

¹ Life of President Reed, Vol. I. six dollars Continental money; beef, p. 331. "Salt, four dollars per bushel very poor, from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. per (hard money); butter, one dollar per pound; flour not to be purchased." pound; sugar, 1s. 6d. per pound, or

seven miles below Philadelphia, and near enough to the American camp for their heavy guns to be distinctly heard there. The defence of Fort Mifflin was intrusted to Baron Arendt, "colonel of the German battalion, an officer of experience and ability,"¹ and in his absence, for he was compelled by illness to leave soon after assuming the command, to Lieutenant-Colonel Smith of Maryland; that of Fort Mercer to our old friend, Colonel Christopher Greene of Rhode Island.

Reinforcements were already on their way to the main army, both from the North and the South, when the battle of Germantown was fought. Among the reinforcements from the North was Varnum's brigade; and while they were yet on their way, an express from Washington met them with a letter of the 7th for Varnum, saying:—

"I desire you will immediately on the receipt of this detach Colonel Greene's and Colonel Angell's regiments with their baggage, with orders to throw themselves into the fort at Red Bank upon the Jersey shore. . . . General Greene has written a particular letter to Colonel Greene, in which he will find instructions." "Upon the whole, sir," end these instructions, "you will be pleased to remember, that the post with which you are now intrusted is of the utmost importance to America, and demands every exertion of which you are capable for its security and defence. The whole defence of the Delaware absolutely depends upon it; and consequently all the enemy's hopes of keeping Philadelphia, and finally succeeding in the object of the present campaign. In-

¹ General to Colonel Greene, October 18, 1777.—Greene MSS.

fluenced by these considerations, I doubt not your regard to the service, and your own reputation, will prompt you to every possible effort to accomplish the important end of your trust, and frustrate the intentions of the enemy.¹

“I arrived here on Saturday last, with my regiment,” writes Greene from Red Bank on the 14th. “They were much fatigued with the march, as I forced thirty-five miles one day. They are now in high spirits, and go to their duty with the greatest cheerfulness. The enclosed return shows our strength. I have found it necessary to contract the fort; but it is now too large for our numbers, as we have very little to expect from the militia. . . . I find it necessary for the security of the post, to keep my men all on fatigue duty. This, I doubt, will cause them to be less spirited in action, if I should be under the necessity to continue it, which must be the case unless I am reinforced. The post I have in charge I am determined to defend, with the small number I command, to the last extremity; yet I doubt my number is much too small to answer your Excellency’s expectations.”

Meanwhile every effort was made “to divert the enemy’s attention and force.”² On the 16th of Oc-

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. V. p. 86. As the “particular letter of General Greene” is referred to as containing Colonel Greene’s instructions, is it not probable that the instructions published by Mr. Sparks are really a letter of Greene in the form of instructions, and written in Washington’s name? If not, why should Washington speak of it as “a particular letter” containing instructions, when he had already given instructions himself of the same date, and covering the whole ground? It is hardly probable that “in which he will find” means only in the same envelope with Greene’s letter; for in the regular order they would have been enclosed in the letter to Varnum, the commander of the brigade, rather than to the subordinate officer whom Varnum was to detach. The question, however, is one of mere curiosity, having no importance, except as it illustrates the intimacy of Greene’s relations with Washington.

² Washington to President of Congress.—Sparks, Vol. V. p. 94.

tober Washington advanced again to the ground which he held before his attack upon Germantown. Light parties familiar with the roads were kept hovering around the enemy, ready at every opportunity to strike at his foragers and intercept his supplies. On one occasion, Greene was ordered to cross the Schuylkill, and attack a supply train, which was said to be on the road to Chester with an escort of fifteen hundred men. But, remembering the disastrous effects of rain on the American cartouch-boxes at the Warren Tavern a month before, Washington added in his instructions: "Come back if it rains." And rain coming on, as had been apprehended, Greene, obedient to his orders, retraced his steps. Next, a strong detachment was sent out under McDougal, and, upon more accurate information of the enemy's designs, reinforced to four thousand men. They advanced "in great spirits," marching most of the night, to attack a post which the enemy was forming at Gray's Ferry, for the protection of their bridge, but found the post deserted, and the bridge destroyed.

These were anxious days for Greene, for he had no common stake in his namesake's success. It was doubtless he who had recommended him for that important trust. In that little garrison of four hundred men were playmates of his boyhood, companions of his youth, friends of his manhood. It was but eleven months since another post, stronger by nature than this could be made

by art, had fallen in a few hours, with all eyes fixed upon it, as they were now fixed upon Red Bank ; and many had laid the loss at his door. What if Christopher Greene should fail as Magaw had failed ? What if the Rhode-Islanders should be panic-stricken, as more than half the garrison of Fort Washington had been panic-stricken ?¹ O, how his enemies and Washington's enemies would rejoice ; and with what a redoublement of strength would they follow up their nefarious machinations ! It was a grave responsibility that he had assumed ; but he never shrunk from responsibility. He still believed that Fort Washington might have been defended. He knew that Fort Mercer would be : —

“ This will be handed you,” he writes to his kinsman, from the camp at Mantuchen, on the 18th, “ by Lieutenant-Colonel Greene, who commands a detachment from my division, sent down as a reinforcement for the posts on the Delaware. They are exceeding good troops ; and are to be depended on as much as any troops in the army. I am in hopes, with this additional strength, you will be able to baffle all the attempts of the enemy to dislodge you. The Baron Arendt, colonel of the German battalion, an officer of experience and ability, is coming down to take the command at Fort Mifflin, agreeable to the determination of the council in the first instance. He is thought to be an officer of great spirit. Remember me to all friends.

“ Your affectionate,

“ N. GREENE.”

¹ Greene to John Brown, September 11, 1778, quoted above, p. 275.

This other Colonel Greene was a Virginian, a resolute, sturdy man, whom we shall meet at Guilford, and on the Reedy Fork. Greene had proved him already at the Brandywine and Germantown ; and would have been glad to have had him at his kinsman's side in the dangerous hour, now close at hand.

But before day on the 22d, and before this reinforcement had arrived, word came to the guard at Timber Creek bridge, that the enemy were coming down upon them from Haddonfield, four battalions of Hessians, twelve hundred veterans, with the veteran Count Donop at their head. The guard promptly took up the bridge ; and the enemy, unable to ford the stream, were compelled to make a four miles' march up its right bank to another bridge. Before they could do this, regain the main road and reach the fort, it was already noon.

The little garrison was on the lookout for them, and, peering curiously through the embrasures and over the parapet, could see them gathering on the skirts of a wood within cannon-shot of the fort, and preparing themselves for the onset. Greene, to inspirit his men, mounted the rampart, and walked up and down, taking a last survey of his defences ; and then turning calmly to look at the enemy through his little pocket spyglass, — the only field-glass of those days. “Fire low, men,” said he, as he came down ; “they have a broad belt just above their hips, — aim at that.”¹ The original fort had

¹ I draw these statements from well-attested tradition. One of the authorities, — Dr. Peter Turner, of East Greenwich, — in his description of the

been planned for a large garrison ; but, under the direction of the gallant Plessis de Mauduit, a skilful engineer, Greene had reduced it to a pentagonal redoubt, with "a good earthen rampart, a ditch, and abbatis in front of the ditch."¹ Within this his four hundred men could work their fourteen cannon, and use their muskets with free room to move in, and not too much space to guard. As his practised eye ran over their ranks, he felt his heart swell with pride. There might be a few doubtful ones among the men, but the officers he knew by trial ; and he knew that in moments like these it is the officer that makes the man. There was young Samuel Ward, who had followed him to Cambridge and Quebec as captain, and now stood by his side as his major,—slender, but tall, vigorous, and erect, with a keen flash in his eye, and immovable firmness on his lips and brow. There was Simeon Thayer, a soldier of the old French war, like Ward, his companion at Cambridge, trained to endurance in the wilderness, and proved in the night assault upon Quebec. There was Israel Angell, another tried man and true ; and the two impetuous Olneys, Jeremiah and Stephen ; and there, too, was young Sylvanus Shaw, of Newport, looking for the last time upon the noonday sun. There they stood, friends and proved companions all of them,

assault, always dwelt with emphasis though a very short man, pacing upon Greene's appearance on the the room with the air and bearing a rampart, often springing to his feet, giant.
as he warmed with the narrative, my ² Chastellux's Travels.
cousin, S. W. Greene tells me, and,

and strong in the strength which friendship and companionship inspire in the hour of danger.¹ Well might Greene's heart beat high as he looked around him upon these brave men, and remembered what was required at his hands and theirs.

Four hours wore feverishly away, while the enemy were planting their cannon and resting themselves from their morning's march. At last, at half past four, two men were seen approaching, an officer with a flag, and a drummer marching before him, and beating his drum as he had been used to beat it in his native Hesse, where drum and bayonet gave the law. The Americans felt their veins tingle as they saw his arrogant gesture, but they sent Lieutenant-Colonel Olney to meet him, and their blood boiled hotter still when they heard the officer's arrogant words: "The King of England orders his rebellious subjects to lay down their arms, and they are warned that if they stand the battle, no quarter whatever will be given them." "We shall neither ask for quarter, nor expect it, and shall defend the fort to the last extremity," answered Olney, and he had hardly regained the works when the enemy opened their fire from their cannon on the skirt of the wood. In an instant the air was filled with the dust and gravel that flew in clouds from the top of the breastwork as

¹ A principle of human nature not range his troops so that "kindred may overlooked by Homer, who makes support kindred and tribe tribe":— Nestor advise Agamemnon to ar-

'Ως φρήτρη φρήτρηφιν ἀρήγη, φῦλη δὲ φύλοις.
Iliad, II. 363.

the balls struck it in swift succession. A few heads were struck too. Then all was silent again but the heavy tread of trained steps, and the stern words of officers to their men, as, with the precision which years of toilsome drilling had given them, the Hessians advanced to the assault. A few moments brought them to the first intrenchment, which had been abandoned in contracting the fort, and finding it empty, though entire, and seeing no signs of the Americans, who lay silent behind their inner works, they raised a loud huzza, waved their hats over their heads, and rushed on to the second intrenchment. The drummer beat his liveliest march, and the officer who had borne the insolent summons was again seen near him at the head of the advance,—a Hessian, some say, and others, an Englishman, who had been sent with the Hessians as interpreter.¹ But the silence of the Americans was the silence of Bunker Hill, and here, as there, a row of black tubes might have been seen reaching over the top of the parapet and following the advancing column, as the eye of the tiger follows its victim; and here, too, no sooner were the enemy within range, than the same deadly fire darted forth from the earthen mound, and the Hessian column shook, fearfully rent and yawning with deep gaps. Down went the drummer headlong

¹ Heath says, "A very capable adjutant whom Donop sent, in order, if possible, to get some idea of the fort took care to have him stopped without the work, and where he had no opportunity to see more than the ditch and parapet on that side."—Memoirs, pp. 137, 138.

among the foremost,—down the bearer of the bloody threat. Still the wavering ranks pressed on, treading now in slippery blood, and stumbling over mangled bodies, and, coming close up to the abbatis, began to tear away the branches. But faster and deadlier came the whizzing balls in front and on the flank, where a part of the old curtain formed a projection, behind which Stephen Olney stood with his trained marksmen, raking the ditch at every fire. Vainly did the poor Hessians stagger forward and pluck madly at the branches to open themselves a passage. Vainly did their officers bring them back, again and again, to the fatal ditch. Officers and men fell alike before the withering fire, some in heaps one upon the other, some among the boughs they were trying to tear away. “Look, Captain, and see me shoot,” said Sweetzer, one of Stephen Olney’s men. “I indulged him four or five times,” says Olney, “and his object fell. I then directed him to fire at an officer, and he only staggered a little.” Not so, poor Donop, who came proudly into the battle, like Nelson at Trafalgar, with his glittering star, which he had won in other battles, on his breast. It caught the eye of one of these trained marksmen, and taking deadly aim, he hit the bold Hessian in the thigh, shattering it with a mortal wound. Still, discipline held the thinned ranks together. There was yet a chance of success on the river-side, and towards it they turned their desperate fury. But this brought them between two fires, that of the small-arms

from the fort, and that of Hazleton's galleys from the water. Courage and discipline were vain here, and, breaking once more, they fled in hopeless confusion.

Meanwhile, the second column had passed the abbatis on the south side of the redoubt, crossed the ditch, and mounted the berme. But here the skilful Mauduit, to make the defence sure, had formed a projecting framework of horizontal stakes, set firm in the embankment, and pointed sharp at the outer end. At first, some of the garrison, remembering the effect of the enemy's cannon when the fight began, were afraid to show their heads above the parapet, and, raising their guns as high as they could, fired downwards at a venture. But Jeremiah Olney soon brought them to reason with his hanger, belaboring their backs with it till they were glad to take aim, as their braver companions did ; and before this fire, too, the enemy soon quailed and broke, some making their way back across the ditch, while some preferred to take their chance as prisoners, rather than to run such a gauntlet again. When Mauduit came out to repair the abbatis, he found some twenty of them standing close up to the shelving of the parapet, in order to keep themselves out of sight. In forty minutes all was over ; four hundred Hessians lay dead or wounded outside of the redoubt, thirty-two Americans within ; amongst them Sylvanus Shaw, whom death had spared when Montgomery fell, and Arnold and Lamb were wounded under the walls of Quebec.

The day had been warm, but the heavy air from the river and the woods grew cold when the sun was down. It was very sad, say those who saw them, to see the dead and the dying as they lay in heaps one upon the other. It was still sadder to hear the doleful cries and groans of the wounded as the keen night-air bit into the bullet-holes and sword-gashes with its frosty breath. "But," says an eyewitness, "I could not but remember what our fate would have been had they conquered." Stephen Olney, who commanded the night guard, had some of them carried into a little floorless hut, and laid beside the fire, "which rendered them," says he, "a little more comfortable than in the open air." Well do I remember the surgeon who was busy among those wounded men through the long hours of the autumn night,—Peter Turner, of East Greenwich, a hale old man in my early childhood, still following his noble art, and ministering to the sick and suffering; and well too do I remember the strange feelings, half awe, at coming so near to the mystery of death, half boyish enjoyment of martial sights and sounds, with which I followed the muffled drum at his funeral, and saw his brethren of the Kentish Guards fire their farewell over his grave.¹

¹ This name, so familiar in Rhode Island, reappears with new honors in the war for the Union: four of the old Surgeon's grandsons, out of a family of six, having served in it from the beginning; one of them, George F. Turner, dying of yellow-fever at Newbern, N. C., in the line of his duty; one, Captain William G. Turner, having been disabled by a severe wound at the battle of Fredericksburg, and the other two returning uninjured to civil life at the close of the war. Nothing but the insufficient

Mauduit was one of the earliest to go the rounds when the battle was over. As he was passing one of the bloody heaps, he heard a voice from it saying, "Whoever you are, draw me hence." It was impossible to see who it was by the faint starlight, but he ordered the soldiers who were with him to take up the wounded man and carry him into the redoubt. When he was come within, and they looked upon him closer by the light of their lanterns, they saw that it was Count Donop, the Hessian colonel. Some of them called to mind the bloody words that had passed his pale lips hardly two hours before. "Well," said they, "it is determined to give no quarter." "I am in your hands," answered the unhappy man; "revenge yourselves." But the vengeance they sought was in binding up his wounds, and placing him under the care of a tender nurse in a neighboring farmhouse, where three days afterwards he died, saying, in French, to Mauduit, with his last breath: "It is finishing a noble career early. I die the victim of my ambition, and of the avarice of my sovereign."¹

health of one, and the imperative domestic duties of the other, prevented the two remaining brothers from taking up arms.

¹ In this account of Donop's death I have followed Mauduit's narrative, as reported by Chastellux, Vol. I. p. 260, &c. The account in Stone's Memoir of Thayer, which is drawn directly from Thayer's papers, differs from it so materially that I give it in full without attempting to decide between the two claimants:

"Major Thayer . . . was detached about the dusk of the evening with a small force, to bring in the wounded. As he was employed in this humane service, two Hessian grenadiers approached and told him their commanding officer, Count Donop, was lying wounded in the edge of the woods, near where their artillery played. Suspecting an attempt to decoy him into an ambuscade, he placed them under guard, telling them if they deceived him they would

And when the enemy were all gone, and the sounds of the conflict had died away, and the dead and the wounded were numbered, "Take your pen," said Colonel Greene to Ward, "and tell his Excellency what we have done." And Ward took his pen and wrote that letter which Mr. Sparks has published in the fifth volume of his *Washington*, so modest and calm, and almost severe, in its simplicity, that when I read it, it seems to me as if I were still listening to the calm tones of his voice, as when, in my inquisitive boyhood, I listened to his stories of Red Bank and Quebec.

Loud and heartfelt was the rejoicing in the American camp when that letter reached it.

"I heartily congratulate you upon this happy event," wrote Washington to the successful Colonel, "and beg you will accept my most particular thanks, and present the same to your whole garrison, both officers and men. Assure them that their gallantry and good behavior meet my warmest approbation."¹

Congress "Resolved, That Congress have an high sense of the merit of Colonel Greene and the officers and men under his command in their gallant defence of the fort at Red Bank on Delaware River, and that an elegant sword be provided by the Board of War, and presented to Colonel Greene."²

immediately be put to death; to this they readily assented, and conducted him to the place where they found the Count lying under a tree mortally wounded. The Count asked the Major if he was an officer, and of what rank, of which being satisfied, he surrendered himself a prisoner. Major Thayer caused six men to

take him in a blanket, and carry him with all possible care to the fort, where he was received by Colonel Greene." — *Stone's Invasion of Canada* in 1775, p. 75.

¹ Sparks's *Washington*, Vol. V. p. 111.

² *Journals of Congress*, Vol. II. p. 312. Tuesday, Nov. 4, 1777.

"With the greatest pleasure I congratulate you on your late brave and successful defence," writes General Greene to his kinsman. "The attempt was bold, and the defence noble. Honor and laurels will be the reward of the garrison."¹

The hopes of the Americans were greatly raised; could the defence be prolonged till the arrival of reinforcements from the North, Howe would yet be driven back to his ships. But it was not to be expected that he would accept Donop's defeat as a final decision of the contest, and permit the Americans to retain their hold upon the Delaware without fighting hard for it.

"Griffin informs me," Greene continues (and with what a pleasant recollection of peaceful Coventry this name comes to us!) "you are in great fear of a siege, and it will be impossible to defend the place any length of time should the enemy lay siege to it. I am sorry to learn that the garrison are growing sickly. Their labor and fatigue must be intolerable. A strong reinforcement will be sent you immediately. I believe three hundred have marched to-day, and more will march to-morrow. You may depend that my influence, so far as it extends, shall be exerted to relieve the anxiety of the garrison."

Great efforts had been made, and were still made, to call out the militia, but with very imperfect success, few answering the call, and most of those few displaying so little spirit that Colonel Greene wrote there was very "little to expect from them";² and Washington even went so far as to

¹ General Greene to Colonel Christopher Greene, October 26, 1777. ² Sparks's Correspondence of the Revolution, Vol. II. p. 4.
Greene MSS.

direct Varnum not to bring them into the forts, " for I am of opinion they would rather dismay than assist the Continental garrison."¹ Varnum, too, was sent into Jersey with a strong detachment to hold the ground on the left bank of the Delaware, and protect the forts from another assault on the land side. But what Washington most desired was to attack the British general himself and drive him from Philadelphia by main force. Light parties were still kept hovering around him ; spies went backwards and forwards with prompt notice of every movement ; his best officers, Greene among them, were sent out to reconnoitre. But to attack with any prospect of success required more strength than he could bring to bear upon such strong works as Howe had surrounded himself with. That strength could only come from the victorious army of the North, and thither Hamilton was despatched to urge the immediate march of strong reinforcements.

Meanwhile Howe's plans were ripening. Fort Mifflin's turn was come. Too large for its garrison, — never strong, — built on a low mud-bank, miscalled an island, which at high tide was always more than half under water, with five batteries of eighteen, twenty-four, and thirty-two pounders within five hundred yards of its walls, and an unwholesome atmosphere undermining the health of its garrison, how long could it be expected to hold out against the overwhelming force that was slowly gathering around it ?

¹ Washington to Varnum, November 7. — Varnum Papers.

Much, at one time, had been expected from the fleet, but Hazlewood was a State officer, and jealousies sprang up between the United States officers and the State officers which prevented a cordial co-operation when nothing but cordial co-operation could have made their exertions effectual. Something, too, was expected from the militia,—not fighting, but work at night in repairing the damage done by the enemy's fire during the day.

“I would have you endeavor,” writes Washington to Varnum at 1 P. M., on the 12th of November, “to prevail upon the militia to go over at night, when there is a cessation of firing, and work till daylight. You may give them the most positive assurance that it is not meant to keep them there against their consent. This would greatly relieve the Continental troops, and by these means a great deal of work might be done.”¹

In October there had been “a scattering cannonade”² up to the day of Donop's defeat, after which both forts were left in peace for a while. On the 10th of November the real siege began. Smith was active, vigilant, and firm. His chief engineer was Fleury, a young Frenchman, who had already distinguished himself at the Brandywine, and was to distinguish himself yet more at Stony Point. The artillery was commanded by Captain-Lieutenant Treat, “one of the most promising and best of young officers,” says Knox, who had seen him tried. With the later reinforcements had come Silas Talbot,

¹ Varnum Papers.

² Angell's Letter in Cowell's Spirit of 1776 in Rhode Island.

of Providence, just promoted by Congress "in consideration of his merit and services in a spirited attempt to set fire to one of the enemy's ships of war in the North River"¹ the year before. These were officers whom the men could look up to with confidence, smiling grimly as Smith uttered a grim joke. "What are you dodging for, sir?" said he sternly to one of his aids, who could not hold his head firm as the bullets whistled by; "the king of Prussia had thirty aids killed in one day." "Yes, sir," answered the young man, "but Colonel Smith has n't so many to lose."

From the beginning the fire was very heavy.

"I am interrupted by the bombs and balls, which fall thickly," writes Fleury in his journal, on the 10th, at noon. "The fire increases, but not the effect; our barracks alone suffer. *Two o'clock.* The direction of the fire is changed; our palisades suffer; a dozen of them are broken down; one of our cannon is damaged,—I am afraid it will not fire straight. *Eleven o'clock at night.* The enemy keep up a firing every half-hour; our garrison diminishes; our soldiers are overwhelmed with fatigue. 11th. The enemy keep up a heavy fire; they have changed the direction of their embrasures, and, instead of battering our palisades in front, they take them obliquely, and do great injury to our north side. *At night.* The enemy fire, and interrupt our works. Three vessels have passed up between us and Province Island without any molestation from the galleys. Colonel Smith, Captain George, and myself wounded. Those two gentlemen passed immediately to Red Bank."

¹ Journals of Congress, Vol. II. p. 285. Friday, October 10, 1777.

Lieutenant-Colonel Russell, of the Connecticut line, now took the command. "Heavy firing," continues Fleury on the 12th; "our two eighteen-pounders at the northern battery dismounted. *At night.* The enemy throw shells, and we are alarmed by thirty boats." "Lieutenant-Colonel Russell, an amiable, sensible man, and an excellent officer, exhausted by fatigue, and totally destitute of health, requested to be recalled."¹ Who will take the command now? Washington's orders had just reached Varnum: the fort was to be held as long as it could be held without sacrificing the garrison. It was no time to detach "officers in rotation" as their terms of service came round.² None but a volunteer could bring the right spirit to work like this.

And then it was that Simeon Thayer, of Providence, came forward, as twice before he had come forward to do perilous duty under the walls of Quebec. On the morning of the 13th the little garrison saw him calmly take his place at their head: detachments from Durkey's and Chandler's Connecticut regiments coming with him to relieve the remainder of Smith's men.³ A new battery was opened upon them as if to greet their arrival. "The walk of our rounds is destroyed," writes Fleury, "the block-houses ruined, and garrison is exhausted with fatigue and ill health." The new detachments, it will be remembered, formed only part of the garrison. Another night of watchful-

¹ Varnum's letter to the Providence Gazette. ³ Angell's Letter of February 17, 1778.

² Id.

ness and labor and constant alarm wears slowly away. Another morning dawns,— the morning of the 14th,— and as Thayer looks out upon the misty river he sees, near the shore, just above the enemy's grand battery, a large floating battery all ready to open upon his crumbling works. By noon he silences it ; but a boat from the fleet deserts to the enemy with the tale of the weakness of the Americans, and the desperate straits to which they are reduced. And now, knowing what a shadow he has to deal with, the British commander will surely gather up all his strength and crush them. Only one thing can save them: a strong diversion by strong detachments from the main army.

Washington knew it, and longed to make the trial.

“ We have just returned from reconnoitring the islands below and up to the Middle Ferry,” writes Greene from Mr. Morris's, November 4th, 8 o'clock, P. M. We purpose to go out again in the morning ; from the present view, Derby appears the only eligible position for the army for the purpose of their crossing the river. It is the opinion of several of the gentlemen that the enemy may be best dislodged from the islands by detachments. Others are of opinion that it would be dangerous, unless the party was covered by the army ; but all are of opinion it is practicable either the one or the other ; and, considering the good consequences that will result from it, it ought to be attempted. Derby is not the most eligible post I ever saw, but it is not so dangerous as to discourage the attempt to relieve Fort Mifflin.

“ The flag was flying at Fort Mifflin at sunset this evening; there has been a very severe cannonade to-day. Enclosed is a letter from Colonel Greene respecting the condition of the fort. The enemy have got up two or three vessels into the Schuylkill; they were attempting to get up a two-and-thirty gun frigate between Hog Island and Province Island. By the best observation we could make, her guns were taken out and followed her in a sloop. She did not get up, but what was the reason I know not.

“ The commodore should be directed to sink a vessel or two in the new channel as soon as possible, and the fort encouraged to hold out to the last.

“ There is but one bridge over the Schuylkill, and that is at the Middle Ferry. I examined the river myself from the falls to the mouth.

“ The enemy have got a chain of redoubts, with abbatis between, from one river to the other. A part of this is from information, and part from my own observation. The Schuylkill is very deep and rapid, too deep for foot to ford it. The bridge at Mattison’s Ford is not in so great forwardness as I could wish; the commanding officer says it will be done in three days; but a bridge of wagons can be thrown over for the foot to pass if that should not be done.

“ The enemy are greatly discouraged by the fort’s holding out so long; and it is the general opinion of the best of citizens that the enemy will evacuate the city if the fort holds out until the middle of next week.

“ From the best accounts we can get, there are but five ships with troops on board in the river.”

“ I trust and believe it is not yet too late to give the forts some relief,” wrote Reed on the 16th.¹

¹ Life of President Reed, Vol. I. p. 336.

But, weighing carefully his own strength and the enemy's, Washington saw that the hazard was too great. He had done all that his means permitted and his judgment warranted, and would not imperil his army by a false step.

But already the fate of Fort Mifflin was decided. Disheartened by the obstinate resistance which they had encountered, the British were, at one moment, it is said, upon the point of giving up the contest and evacuating the city. But new resolutions came with the discovery of a new channel which the current, turned from its natural course by the *chevaux-de-frise*, had worn between Hog Island and the Pennsylvania shore. A passage was now open for their heavy ships.

A grand and fearful sight that noble three hundred presented to the morning sun of the 15th of November.¹ All the preceding day they had fought against overwhelming odds, all the preceding night they had worked and slept by turns, working rather to clear away ruins than to build up new defences, and sleeping on the slimy ooze which formed the floor of the fort.² Their fort itself was shattered and rent in every part; their block-houses were destroyed; only two cannon were left mounted; five strong redoubts were training their heavy guns upon them from Province Island; six ships, four of them sixty-fours, and two of them forties,

¹ In his admirable letter of the 17th November, to the President of Congress.—Sparks, Vol. V. p. 151.

² Marshall.

were within nine hundred yards of them on the river; three ships, "with a galley and some smaller armed vessels,"¹ were coming up and taking station between them and the redoubt on the Jersey shore, which they had counted upon for protection against a cross fire. With eyes that looked out heavily from under weary lids they saw these preparations,—saw the fatal circle closing slowly around them; and, doing what little they could to prepare themselves for the struggle, calmly awaited the signal to begin. The autumn sun was already high over their heads when it came, a single bugle-note, and at once from ship and battery came flash and roar and hurtling balls, and soon a dark cloud gathered around the ships and settled heavily over the fort. With throbbing hearts the garrison of Fort Mercer looked down from their walls. When will that cloud break and show us our own flag again? It broke, and the broad folds of the young flag were still waving defiantly over the ruins, and still from the two remaining guns went forth a resolute answer to the enemy's cannon. Soon those two were dismounted also. At eleven a "ship mounting twenty twenty-four-pounders and a sloop with three twenty-four-pounders, warped up back of Hog Island," close to the fort,—so close that the men in their tops could look straight down into the works and throw hand-grenades into them. Their very yard-arms seemed to overhang the shattered walls. Not a man could show himself

¹ Lord Howe. Almon's Remembrancer, Vol. V. p. 499.

upon the platform without becoming the mark for forty eager rifles. At a quarter before three came a faint dawn of hope. Varnum wrote to Thayer "that the floating batteries and some of the galleys were working up to attack" these new enemies. With longing eyes the little garrison saw them draw nigh; with heavy hearts they saw them put about and go back. The fleet had failed them.¹ And all the while the fatal fire kept on,—direct from the ships, a cross fire from the land batteries. Over a thousand balls came rushing in upon them in twenty minutes.² "Long before night there was not a single palisade left."³ The embrasures were knocked in, "the parapet levelled." The men crouched behind the fragments of wall outside the fort, the only protection left them,⁴ grasping their weapons firmly for a last struggle, hand to hand. Treat was dead. A first-lieutenant, two sergeants, and three privates of the artillery were dead; nine others were lying wounded by their guns, several of them mortally; sixteen dead and wounded out of twenty, the full number of the artillery when the siege began. Talbot had fought for hours with his wrist shattered, and at last was wounded in the hip also. Fleury had been wounded four days, but stuck to his post.

Night came on, and welcome were its protecting shadows to these weary men. The ships drew off, dropping down to the lower *chevaux-de-frise*. The

¹ Angell's Letter.

² Varnum's Letter.

³ Knox to Colonel Lamb.—Life of Lamb, p. 173.

⁴ Angell's Letter.

fire from the batteries continued. Then as darkness settled over the scene the sound of oars was heard from the Jersey side. Varnum had sent boats over to take off the garrison, if Thayer thought best to evacuate. The gallant fellow, who knew how much every hour's delay was worth to Washington, would gladly have held out longer. Even now he could hardly bring his mind to acknowledge that all hope was gone. He collected the stores and put them into the boats; he collected the wounded, and then out of the remnants of his three hundred, selecting for himself forty, he sent the rest away. They at least and the stores were safe. It was seven in the evening when all this was done. Then with his chosen forty he again went the rounds to see what could yet be done for defence. On the bosom of the broad river all was silent, and the peaceful stars looked down into it as sweetly as if man's blood had never defiled its waters. But far down where his eye could not pierce the darkness, Thayer knew that the enemy's ships were lying quietly at anchor, waiting only for the return of daylight to close in upon him again. And from the enemy's batteries, which half girded him round like the curve of the half-moon,¹ shells still came shrieking through the air, and balls still came dashing among the ruins. Midnight brought no change, no protecting storm, no sudden shift of wind, no prospect of succor from man or from the elements. It was madness, not manly

¹ Angell's Letter.

courage, to stay longer, and spiking the dismounted guns which he had no means of removing, and setting fire to the remains of the barracks, that not a fragment might fall entire into the hands of the enemy, he drew off his men to the shore, distributed them among the boats, and crossed the perilous passage in the light of the blazing ruins. Eager hands grasped his as he entered Fort Mercer, where no one had expected to see him again alive,¹ and when for the first time in five nights he laid his head upon a pillow, he could say to himself, "I can sleep now, for I have done my duty." And if any should accuse me of dwelling too minutely upon these details, I would remind them that a hasty Congress, regarding Smith alone as commander of Fort Mifflin, failed to do justice to Thayer, thus making it more imperatively the duty of history to hold up his name as that of a brave man, a skilful officer, and a true patriot.²

¹ Varnum's Letter.

² A sword was voted to Smith, who was fully entitled to it; but no notice was taken of Thayer.

My authorities for Red Bank and Fort Mifflin are Ward's letter in Sparks's *Washington*, Vol. V. p. 112, *Washington's Writings*, Vol. V., Greene MSS., Varnum MSS., Varnum's Letter to the *Providence Gazette*, and a letter of Colonel Angell, republished, both of them, in Cowell's *Spirit of 1776* in Rhode Island, an important letter of Knox to Colonel Lamb, in Leake's *Life of Lamb*, p. 192, Olney's *Narrative in William's*

Life of Olney, Chastellux's *Travels*, Vol. I. p. 260, &c., of English Translation, Gordon, Marshall, and Ramsay, Reed's *Life of Reed*, and Dawson's *Battles of the United States*. The account in Lee's *Memoirs* cannot be reconciled with those of Varnum, Angell, and Knox, &c., or rather his narrative is very inaccurate, unless all the others are so. I have also consulted the official letter in Almon's *Remembrancer*, Vol. V., and the memoir of Major Thayer in E. M. Stone's *Invasion of Canada in 1775*, — a valuable contribution to American history.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Howe resolved to have the Left Bank of the Delaware.—Cornwallis sent to secure it.—Greene sent to oppose him.—Reasons for disliking the Service.—Conway's Letter to Gates.—Ought Red Bank to be held?—Greene on the March.—Letter to his Wife.—Crosses the Delaware.—Letter to Varnum.—To Washington.—Fort Mercer evacuated.—Greene's Prospects not bright.—Glover's Brigade.—Colonel Comstock.—Council at Head-quarters on attacking Philadelphia.—Letters to and from Washington.—Greene rejoins the main Army.—Contemporary Opinion of his Conduct.—Marshall's Opinion.

SLOWLY but surely Sir William Howe was working out his plans. Fort Mifflin was won; the eastern channel was free; but Fort Mercer still stood with a perpetual menace upon the heights of Red Bank. So long as those frowning batteries looked down upon the ship-channel, there could be no free passing up and down the sorely needed river. This point, too, must be won, and won at all hazards. Cornwallis, the ablest of the British generals, was chosen for the important task, and, crossing the Delaware at Chester, on the 19th of November, he joined at Billingsport another detachment just arrived from New York, under Sir Thomas Wilson, and came out with overwhelming forces upon the rear of the little garrison.¹

¹ Howe's Letter in Almon's Remembrance, Vol. V. p. 502.

The possibility of such a movement had been foreseen by Washington, who had kept Varnum at Woodbery, in lower Jersey, with his brigade, and such parties of the reluctant militia as he could bring up to his assistance. But when Cornwallis was sent, he too turned to his trusted and best, and sent Greene to oppose him.

It was not a pleasant duty for Greene, for there were many chances against his being able to look his adversary in the face, and he knew what the consequences of a failure would be.

“I am very sorry,” he had just written to Henry Marchant, “to find the public so illy informed with regard to the operations here, both with respect to men and events. We fight by main strength. It would give me pleasure if some of your body were always with the army. It would enable them to judge of men and measures, to reward merit, and remedy evils. Private friendship often sounds the trumpet of praise, and imposes upon the credulity and good-nature of your board.

“The successes to the northward have given great relief to the Northern States; but the American affairs are in a most critical situation, owing to the universal dislike to service. I think I never saw the army so near dissolving since I have belonged to it. The officers cannot maintain themselves, and, from the present temper prevailing in general, determine to leave the service at the close of the campaign.

“Military rank being conferred upon people of all orders so lavishly has rendered its value of much less importance than formerly. It was once considered a jewel of great value, but it now begins to be held in light esteem.”¹

¹ Greene MSS. Greene to Henry Marchant. Camp near Philadelphia, November 17, 1777.

It must not be forgotten that, only seven days before these lines were written, Washington had written to Conway:—

“A letter which I received last night contained the following paragraph: ‘In a letter from General Conway to General Gates, he says, *Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it.*’”¹

The cabal was now at its height, startled, but not discouraged by its sudden detection; and Greene knew that the first place among those “bad counsellors” was assigned to him.

Still, it was not without some hope of “giving an effectual check”² to the enemy’s forces in Jersey, that he went forth to meet Cornwallis. St. Clair, Knox, and De Kalb, who had been sent down to examine the ground, were “all clear in their opinion, that keeping possession of the Jersey shore at or near Red Bank was of the last importance.”³ “Very much will depend upon keeping possession of Fort Mercer,” wrote Washington to Varnum on the evening of the 19th,⁴ “as, to reduce it, the enemy will be obliged to put themselves in a very disagreeable position to them, and advantageous to us, upon a narrow neck of land between two creeks with our force pressing upon their rear.

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. V. p. 139.

² Washington to Varnum, November 19.—Varnum MSS.

³ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. V. p. 163. This must be understood of the shore rather than the fort, which, ac-

cording to De Kalb’s report to the Duke de Broglie, was to be mined, and on the enemy’s advance blown up.—Kapp’s De Kalb, p. 125. See also Reed’s Reed, Vol. I. p. 339.

⁴ Varnum MSS.

Therefore, desire Colonel Greene to hold it if possible till the relief arrives." Major Ward had just been with him with a letter from the colonel, giving a general account of the condition of the fort, and referring him to Ward "for a more particular" one. "Thus, having given your Excellency," says the last paragraph, "what appears to me, with the unanimous voice of all the field-officers of the garrison, a true state of our circumstances and observations thereon, I wait your Excellency's particular commands and directions for an invariable rule for me to pursue."¹ Washington knew what this meant, and how literally the sturdy colonel would interpret his orders; and in closing his letter to Varnum he adds, "Although I am anxious to have the fort kept, I do not mean that it should be done, at all events, so as to endanger the safety of the men, without any probability of success."

Thus, for the purpose of the expedition, everything depended upon coming up strong enough and in time. On the morning of the 20th Greene began his march; in the evening he writes to his wife from *Forelanesend*, near Bristol:—

"I am now on my march for Red Bank fort. Lord Cornwallis crossed over into the Jerseys day before yesterday, to invest that place with a large body of troops. I am in hopes to have the pleasure to meet his Lordship. This eccentric movement will lengthen out the campaign for some weeks at least, and it is possible may transfer

¹ Sparks's Correspondence of the Revolution, Vol. II. p. 43.

the seat of war for the winter. The enemy are now getting up their stores and fortifying the city of Philadelphia as strong as possible. The weather begins to get severe, and campaigning of it disagreeable, but necessity obliges us to keep the field for some time. . . . I had a fall from my horse some time ago, but have got entirely over it, except a sprain in my wrist. . . . I lodge in a fine country-house to-night. The Marquis of Fayette is in company with me ; he has left a young wife, and a fine fortune of fourteen thousand pounds sterling per annum, to come and engage in the cause of liberty : this is a noble enthusiasm. He is one of the sweetest-tempered young gentlemen ; he purposes to visit Boston this winter ; if so, you'll have an opportunity to see him. . . . Your brother, I am told, behaved the hero the other day, in the attack on Red Bank."

The next morning he crosses the Delaware in advance of his troops, and at noon writes to Varnum from Burlington :—

"I make no doubt you are acquainted with the marching of the troops of my division to join you. I am at a loss respecting your situation, the condition of Fort Mercer, or the operations of the enemy in the Jerseys. A report prevails here this morning that Fort Mercer is evacuated, and the fleet below burnt. You'll please to inform me as to the truth of the reports, where you are, where the enemy is, and where you think a junction of our forces can be easiest formed ; and also, if you think an attack can be made upon the enemy with a prospect of success. General Glover's brigade is on the march to join us, and Morgan's corps of rangers. General Huntington's brigade, I imagine, will be with you to-day." "I am a stranger to all the lower part of Jersey," he adds, in a postscript, " [which] makes me be particular."

At five, the express returns with Varnum's answer, and he immediately writes to Washington:—

“ General Varnum this moment acquainted me that Fort Mercer was evacuated last evening. Commodore Hazlewood informs me also that the greater part, if not all the fleet, except the thirteen galleys, were burnt this morning; one or two of the smallest vessels attempted to pass the city, and could not effect it. One was set on fire, and one other fell into the enemy's hands, owing to the matches going out; the people made their escape. My division arrived on the other side of the river about ten this morning, but the want of scows to get over the baggage will prevent our marching till the morning; the greater part of the night, if not the whole, will be employed in getting over the baggage and artillery.

“ General Varnum has retreated to Mount Holly. I purpose to see him and General Huntington early in the morning; if it is practicable to make an attack upon the enemy, it shall be done; but I am afraid the enemy will put it out of my power, as they can so easily make us take such a circuitous march by taking up the bridge over Timber Creek. I cannot promise anything until I learn more of the designs of the enemy, their strength, and the position they are in. If it is possible to make an attack upon them with a prospect of success, it shall be done. Colonel Shrieve was with me this afternoon about turning out the militia. I wish he may succeed, but from the temper of the people there appears no great prospect. I have heard nothing from General Glover's brigade. I hope Colonel Morgan's corps of light troops will be on in the morning, and Captain Lee's troop of light-horse.

“ The fleet are greatly distressed at the reflections thrown out against the officers; the commodore thinks the

officers are greatly injured ; he asserts they did their duty faithfully."

N. B.—"The commodore this moment informs me there is three sloops and a brig past safe by the city."

Thus the chief purpose of the expedition was already lost the very day that it began. Cornwallis was too strong, had too much the start of him, had been too near his object at starting. Still Christopher Greene would have held out longer.

"I shall follow your directions, either to evacuate or defend the fort," he said to the generals who had been sent to consult with him, and who advised an evacuation. "I know what we have done when the works were not half completed. Now they are finished, and I am not afraid."¹

Greene's prospect of success was not bright. He had heard nothing yet of Glover's brigade, without which his inferiority to Cornwallis was too great to justify him in coming within striking distance of the British general. Lee's light-horse, on which he depended for information of the enemy's movements, had not yet arrived. Yet there was a second object even after the loss of the fort. It was important to show that the country would not be given up to the enemy without an effort. The people must still see their own

¹ This is Gordon's statement, Vol. III. p. 9, which I follow with some hesitation, as it cannot easily be reconciled with St. Clair's, Knox's and De Kalb's report (Washington, Vol. V. p. 163), or with Greene's letter quoted above. But as Gordon was

generally well informed, and, though he sometimes mistakes, seldom if ever invents, I suppose him here to have confounded the mission of St. Clair, Knox, and De Kalb with advice given by Varnum and Huntington after their departure.

flag somewhere amongst them, must still feel that Congress and Washington had not forgotten them. If, besides this, a successful blow could be struck, either at a part or the whole of the enemy's force, it would be wise to strike it; but it was no time for great hazards.

"I came to this place yesterday morning," Greene writes to Washington from Mount Holly on the 23d. "The difficulty of crossing the baggage over the river prevented its coming up last night. The boats and scows at Burlington are under very bad regulations. General Varnum had retreated, as I wrote your Excellency before, to this place. He left a party of militia at Haddonfield. I am afraid there has a very considerable quantity of stores fallen into the enemy's hands, but principally belonging to the fleet. The enemy and the militia had a small skirmish at Little Timber Creek Bridge; the enemy crossed there in the afternoon and encamped. They say they are going to take post at Haddonfield, to cover the lower counties, and open a market from thence. Those counties are some of the most fertile in the State, from whence great quantities of provision can be drawn. A large number of boats went up to Philadelphia from the shipping yesterday morning; there are some soldiers on board of them.

"Colonel Morgan's corps of light infantry advanced this morning for Haddonfield. If the troops can be got in readiness, I intend to put the whole in motion this afternoon. We are greatly distressed for want of a party of light-horse.

"I must beg your Excellency to forward some as soon as possible.

"I have nothing from Glover's brigade; I sent an ex-

press to the commanding officer yesterday, but, from the present situation of things, I believe it will be best not to wait their coming up.

“ Every piece of intelligence necessary for my information, with regard to the movements of the enemy in the city, I must entreat your Excellency to forward to me by express.

“ Colonel Shrieve will attempt to turn out the militia, but the Commissary’s department is in such a bad situation, and the people so unwilling to furnish supplies, that it will be difficult to subsist a large body.

“ A considerable body of light-horse would be very serviceable here.

“ Your Excellency’s letter of the 22d instant is just come to hand ; you have in this all the intelligence I have received.”

Here again we have a proof of the intimacy of Washington’s intercourse with Greene. When they are together in camp, it is a personal intercourse ; the moment they are separated, it takes the form of long and frequent letters. “ Received and answered the same day,” is Washington’s indorsement upon this last letter, a frequent indorsement upon the letters of both, for both equally felt the necessity of leaning upon each other. For Washington, Greene was the man of sound judgment and “ singular abilities ” ; for Greene, Washington was the great and good man, whom God had given us for a leader in a holy war, just as, in the sore need of his chosen people, he had raised up great men to guide and rescue them. In studying Greene’s character, we should err greatly if we were to let his firm, direct, common-sense way of

dealing with men and estimating motives deceive us as to the influence of his affectionate heart and religious convictions.

"I have nothing new to communicate to your Excellency with respect to the motions of the enemy," begins his letter of the 24th. "They remain, or did last night, at Woodbury, with a guard at Timber Creek, consisting of about six hundred men. The boats that went up, mentioned in my former letters, I conjecture had on board the baggage of the army; the soldiers seen on board were the regimental guard to the baggage.

"The militia of this State is dwindling to nothing. General Varnum says there were upwards of fourteen hundred a few days since; they are reduced now to between seven and eight. Colonel Shrieve is gone out to see what impression he can make upon the people, and to endeavor to draw together as large a number as possible, but I cannot flatter myself with any considerable reinforcement. I will endeavor to enclose your Excellency a return of our strength in continentals and militia this afternoon if possible. We are all ready to advance, but the general officers think it advisable to wait the return of the first express sent to Glover's brigade, to learn the strength and time the junction may be formed with that brigade. I have heard nothing where it is, notwithstanding I have sent three express. Captain Lee is not arrived, neither have I heard anything of him. I would wish, if possible, some horse might be sent, as every army is an unwieldy body without them; in this country they are more immediately necessary to prevent the enemy from sending out theirs to collect stock.

"Colonel Cox, who is with me at this place, says, if the enemy can open a communication with the three lower counties, they will be able, independent of all the sur-

rounding country, to draw supplies of every kind necessary for the subsistence of the army, and inhabitants of the city of Philadelphia.

“ Your Excellency observes in your last, you must leave the propriety of attacking the enemy to me ; would you advise me to fight them with very unequal numbers ? Most people, indeed all, agree they are near or quite five thousand strong ; our force is upwards of three, exclusive of the militia, which may be from seven to eight hundred at most. The situation the enemy are in, the ease with which they can receive reinforcements, and the difficulty of our knowing it, will render it absolutely necessary, when we advance from this place, to make the attack as soon as possible. I had much rather engage with three thousand against five than attack the enemy’s lines, and there is a much greater prospect of succeeding, but still I cannot promise myself victory, nor even a prospect of it, with inferior numbers.

“ I have seen of late the difficulty your Excellency seemed to labor under, to satisfy the expectations of an ignorant populace, with great concern. It is our misfortune to have an extent of country to cover that demands four times our numbers ; the enemy so situated as to be very difficult to approach, and, from pretty good authority, superior to us in numbers. Under these disadvantages your Excellency has the choice of but two things,—to fight the enemy without the least prospect of success, upon the common principles of war, or to remain inactive, and be subject to the censure of an ignorant and impatient populace. In doing one, you may make a bad matter worse, and take a measure that, if it proves unfortunate, you may stand condemned for by all military gentlemen of experience ; in pursuing the other, you have the approbation of your own mind, you give your country an opportunity to exert itself to supply the present deficiency, and also act upon such

military principles as will justify you to the best judges in the present day, and to all future generations. For my own part, I feel censure with as great a degree of sensibility as is possible, and I feel ambitious to do everything that common sense can justify ; but I am fully persuaded in attempting more you may make a temporary a lasting evil. The cause is too important to be trifled with to show our courage, and your character too deeply interested to sport away upon unmilitary principles.

“ For your sake, for my own sake, and for my country’s sake, I wish to attempt everything which will meet your Excellency’s approbation. I will run any risk or engage under any disadvantages, if I can only have your countenance, if unfortunate. With the public, I know success sanctifies everything, and that only.

“ I cannot help thinking, from the most dispassionate survey of the operations of the campaign, that you stand approved by reason and justified by every military principle. With respect to my own conduct I have ever given my opinion with candor, and to my utmost executed with fidelity whatever was committed to my charge. In some instances we have been unfortunate. In one I thought I felt the lower of your Excellency’s countenance, when I am sure I had no reason to expect it. It is out of my power to command success, but I trust I have ever endeavored to deserve it. It is mortifying enough to be a common sharer in misfortunes, but to be punished as the author, without deserving it, is truly afflicting.

“ Your Excellency’s letter of the 22d, but I suppose it was of yesterday, this moment came to hand. As I have wrote so fully on the subject, I have nothing to add, only that to advance from this place before Glover’s brigade joins us, unless we attack the enemy without them, will rather injure them than facilitate our designs. But if your

Excellency wishes the attack to be made immediately, give me only your countenance, and, notwithstanding it is contrary to the opinion of the general officers here, I will take the consequences upon myself.

“ Enclosed is a copy of a letter from Colonel Ellis, at Haddonfield.

“ The hospitals in the Jerseys are greatly complained of. They prove a grave for many of the poor soldiery ; principally owing to the negligence of the surgeons who have the care of the hospitals. How far these complaints are well grounded I cannot pretend to say, but would beg leave to recommend the sending of a good trusty officer to inspect the management of the hospitals, and to remain there until regularly relieved.”

This was not very hopeful, but at half past three came Burnet with tidings of Glover’s brigade. “ They will be at the block-house to-night, eight miles from this place,” Greene adds in a postscript to Washington, and begins to hope he may yet have a chance to meet Cornwallis.

In the Jersey militia there was a Colonel Adam Comstock, who, unlike many of his comrades, longed for a brush with the enemy. “ O, how I want to give them a flogging before they leave the Jerseys !” he says in one of his letters to Greene ;¹ and under his inspiration the militia made several attacks upon the enemy’s pickets and took several prisoners. He was upon the lookout for information also, and skilful in his devices for obtaining it.

“ This moment,” he writes to Greene from Haddonfield

¹ Greene MSS.

at half past twelve on the 25th, "I arrived from a reconnoitring tour near Little Timber Creek Bridge ; sent a smart young woman, who had a sister in Gloucester, as a spy to Gloucester. She has returned, and I believe has received no other damage than a kiss from the Hessian general,—this is as she says. She reports that a very large number of British and Hessian troops are in Gloucester ; that they are embarking in boats and going to Philadelphia ; and that her sister there informed her they had been embarking ever since early in the morning. That Lord Cornwallis quartered at Colonel Ellis's house, and the Hessian general at a house opposite, who asked the young woman where the rebels were. She answered she could not tell, she had seen none of them. She said she passed many sentries before she came to Little Timber Creek Bridge, where she passed the last.

"I doubt not this information. I fear they will be too quick for us. Colonel Hart's regiment is here."

Greene instantly wrote to Washington :—

"This moment (four o'clock) received intelligence the enemy are embarking from Gloucester and crossing to Philadelphia. Colonel Comstock sends this intelligence, and says it may be depended upon. I have ordered General Varnum's and General Huntington's brigades to advance immediately, to fall upon the enemy's rear, and prevent their getting off their stock. I wait your Excellency's orders to march where you may think advisable. Colonel Shepard got into camp about noon ; the whole body of the troops will be ready to move at a moment's warning. The rifle corps, and about six hundred militia, are upon the enemy's flanks.

"A detachment from Captain Lee's horse took nine

prisoners yesterday,—the first account I ever had of their being in this quarter.”

At three Comstock writes again:—

“ Seven prisoners just arrived here from the enemy, taken by the militia about three miles from this place on the road to Gloucester. The prisoners I have examined; two of them are gunners, and two matrosses, belonging to the first regiment of artillery; the other three belong to the thirty-third regiment; they were about half a mile from their picket plundering. Those belonging to the artillery had three of the artillery horses with them, marked G, which are also taken. This express rides one of them. The prisoners, on examination, say the main body lies about four miles from this on the Gloucester road encamped; that their line forms a triangle; that they are to wait there till they have embarked all the stock for Philadelphia, which will take 'em all day; that the army expect to embark to-morrow, and go into winter quarters; that they have two six-pounders in front, two ditto in the rear, and some smaller in the centre; that they were not in the least apprehensive of any of the American army being within miles of them; otherwise, they should not have been taken in the manner they were. This moment some Hessian prisoners arrived here, taken in the same manner. I have not examined them. I could wish your army was here now, for I think they may be surprised very easily; they gave various accounts of their number, from five to eight thousand. They mostly agree that Billings Fort and Fort Mercer are levelled. O, how I want to give them a flogging before they leave the Jerseys!”

Meanwhile, a new question had arisen at head-

quarters. Washington had reconnoitred the enemy's works; and Stirling, Wayne, Scott, and Woodford were eager for an attack upon Philadelphia. "The enemy's force is weakened," they said, "by the absence of Cornwallis; and, if we bring three columns suddenly against their north line, and enfilade their works from the hills on the other side of the Schuylkill, while Greene, embarking two thousand men at Dunk's Ferry, enters the city at Spruce Street, secures the bridge over the Schuylkill, and takes the lines in the rear, we shall surely succeed." On the evening of the 24th the council met to discuss the question. The discussion was protracted and warm. There can be little doubt to which side Washington's sound judgment led him; for, not only were the British works very strong, but Greene's co-operation depended upon so many contingencies, as to make it extremely doubtful whether it would be possible for him to reach the city in season, if he reached it at all. Still, public opinion called so loudly for an attack, and civilians were so clamorous, that he thought it wise to strengthen himself by a more solemn expression of the opinions of his officers. Therefore, when the council broke up, they were directed to give their opinions the next morning in writing; and an express was sent off to Greene in the night for his. On comparing them, eleven were found against it, and four only in its favor. Amongst those who opposed it were Greene, Sullivan, Knox, De

Kalb, Du Portail, the best and most experienced officers in the army.¹

But when Greene wrote to Washington from Mount Holly, at midnight of the 25th, he did not know what the decision would be.

“I wrote your Excellency this afternoon,” he says, “that the enemy were crossing from the Jerseys to Philadelphia, and that the intelligence came from Colonel Comstock. He is stationed at Haddonfield to collect intelligence.

“I have received two letters from the Colonel to-day, the first dated at twelve o’clock, the last at three, both of which I have enclosed. It appears to me the enemy are crossing their cattle; but I much doubt whether any part of their troops have crossed the river; perhaps they may begin in the morning. I am divided in my mind how to act. If your Excellency intends an attack on Philadelphia, our moving down to Haddonfield will prevent our co-operating with you; but if the enemy are crossing, the attack upon the city would not be warrantable now, if before, without our whole collective force at least; and as part is below and part here, I wish to move forward for the support of the troops below, and attack the enemy if practicable.

“I expected before this to have received your Excellency’s further orders; but as I have not, and from the intelligence there appears a prospect of attempting something here, I have ventured to put the troops in motion. If I should receive orders to the contrary, I can speedily return. If the enemy cross to the city, they may

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. V. pp. 167, 168. Duer’s Life of Lord Sterling, pp. 177, 178. Reed, anxious as he was to see Howe driven from Philadelphia, was against this dangerous attempt. For a judicious examination of the question see Marshall, Vol. I. pp. 181, 182.

be attacked at any time hereafter as well as now. If they have not crossed, and are in a situation to be attacked, I shall have an opportunity to attempt something. I am anxious to do everything in my power; and more especially as the people seem to be dissatisfied at the evacuation of Red Bank Fort."

It was not till afternoon of the next day, the 26th, that the new orders reached him.

"Your Excellency's letter of the 25th reached me at this place," he writes to Washington from Haddonfield, "at four. I halted the troops on the receipt of it, those that had not got into the town. General Varnum's and Huntington's brigades got to this place before the letter came to hand. I am sorry our march will prove a fruitless one; the enemy have drawn themselves down upon the peninsula of Gloucester; the ships are drawn up to cover the troops, there is but one road that leads down to the point, on each side the ground is swampy and full of thick underbrush, that makes the approaches impracticable almost; these difficulties might have been surmounted, but we could reap no advantage from it, the shipping being so posted as to cover the troops, and this country is so intersected with creeks, that approaches are rendered extremely difficult, and retreat very dangerous. I should not have halted the troops, but all the general officers were against making an attack, the enemy being so securely situated and so effectually covered by their shipping.

"We have a fine body of troops, and in fine spirits, and every one appears to wish to come to action. I proposed to the gentlemen drawing up in front of the enemy, and to attack their picket, and to endeavor to draw them out, but they were all against it from the improbability of the enemy's coming out. The Marquis,

with about four hundred militia and the rifle corps, attacked the enemy's picket last evening, killed about twenty and wounded as many more, and took about twenty prisoners. The Marquis is charmed with the spirited behavior of the militia and rifle corps ; they drove the enemy above half a mile, and kept the ground until dark. The enemy's picket consisted of about three hundred, and were reinforced during the skirmish. The Marquis is determined to be in the way of danger.¹

“ From the best observations I am able to make, and from the best intelligence I can obtain, it is uncertain whether any of the enemy have crossed the river ; the boats are constantly going, but I believe they are transporting stock ; there are as many men in the returning boats as goes over ; by to-morrow it will be reduced to a certainty. I believe the enemy have removed the great *chevaux-de-frise* ; there went up sixty sail of vessels this morning. If the obstructions are removed in the river, it accounts for the enemy's evacuating Carpenter's and Province Islands, as they are no longer necessary. The prisoners say the enemy are going into winter quarters as soon as they get up the river.

“ Enclosed is our order of battle with a plate agreeing to the order.

“ I propose to leave General Varnum's brigade and the rifle corps at this place for a few days, especially the riflemen, who cover the country very much. General Varnum's brigade will return to Mount Holly to-morrow or next day. I will make further inquiry respecting the hospitals, and give such directions as appear necessary. My division, Huntington's and Glover's brigades, will proceed with all despatch to join your Excellency. I could wish the enemy might leave the Jerseys before us.”

¹ See also *Lafayette Memoirs, &c.*, Vol. I. p. 33.

By this time Washington had received Greene's letter of the 24th. Its manly sympathy touched his heart; and he immediately replied in his own hand, subscribing himself, as he seldom does to any one, "With sincere regard and affection":—

" My letter of yesternight (wrote after I returned from a view of the enemy's lines from the other side Schuylkill) I must refer to. Our situation, as you justly observe, is distressing from a variety of irremediable causes, but more especially from the impracticability of answering the expectations of the world without running hazards which no military principles can justify, and which, in case of failure, might prove the ruin of our cause; patience, and a steady perseverance in such measures as appear warranted by sound reason and policy, must support us under the censure of the one, and dictate a proper line of conduct for the attainment of the other; that is the great object in view. This, as it ever has, will, I think, ever remain the first wish of my heart, however I may mistake the means of accomplishment; that your views are the same, and that your endeavors have pointed to the same end, I am perfectly satisfied of, although you seem to have imbibed a suspicion which I never entertained.

" I can foresee inconveniences, I can foresee losses, and I dare say I may add that I can foresee much dissatisfaction that will arise from the withdrawing the Continental troops from the Jerseys. But how is it to be avoided? We cannot be divided when the enemy are collected. The evils which I apprehended from throwing troops into the Jerseys now stare me more forcibly in the face, and a day or two, if you cannot join us in that time, may realize them; for my mind scarce entertains a doubt but that General Howe is collecting his whole force with a view of pushing at this army. This, especially under the informa-

tion you have received of Lord Cornwallis's recrossing the Delaware, induces me to press despatch upon you, that our junction may be formed as speedily as possible, and the consequences of a division avoided.

" The current sentiment, as far as I can collect it, is in favor of our taking post the other side Schuylkill ; in this case the Jerseys will be left totally uncovered ; consequently all the craft in the river, with their rigging, guns, &c. ; the hospitals on that side of the river, the magazines of provisions which the commissaries are about establishing in the upper part of Jersey, &c. Think, therefore, I beseech you, of all these things, and prepare yourself by reflection and observation (being on the spot) to give me your advice on these several matters. The boats (those belonging to the public, and built for the purpose of transporting troops, &c. across the river) ought in my judgment to be removed, as soon as they have served your present calls, up to Coryell's Ferry at least, if not higher. I am almost inclined to think (if we should cross the Schuylkill) that they ought to be carted over also.

" It has been proposed that some of the galleys should fall down to or near the mouth of Frankfort Creek, in order to prevent troops from coming up by water, and falling in the rear of our pickets near the enemy's lines ; will you discuss with the Commodore on this subject ? Will you also ask what is become of the hands that were on board the vessels which were burnt ? "¹

Washington's letter found Greene at Mount Holly, on his march back to camp.

" Your favor of yesterday," he writes on the 27th, " I received last night about twelve o'clock. The greater part of the troops returned to this place last night, and

¹ Greene MSS.

marched early this morning to cross the Delaware. I stayed at Haddonfield myself, with General McDougal's division, to give the necessary orders to the militia. I have left the rifle corps at Haddonfield, and Captain Lee's troop of light-horse, to encourage the militia and awe the enemy, — to prevent their coming out in small parties. Colonel Olney had orders to make an attack upon their picket this morning, but they drew them in so close to their main body, and there being but one road, he could not effect it ; their picket consisted of about three hundred men. I am much afraid the withdrawing of the troops will greatly alarm the country. Any position below this with any considerable force would be very dangerous ; the country is exceedingly intersected with creeks, and lies so contiguous to Philadelphia. I think any body of troops may be surprised from the city at Haddonfield in five hours, and at almost any place in its neighborhood.

“ The hospitals will be in some danger at Burlington, Bordentown, and Princeton, if all the troops are withdrawn from this State ; but if the sick were ordered to be immediately removed, it would still increase the alarm in the country, for which reason I would risk what are there at present, and order the Director-General not to send any more there.

“ I shall set out immediately for Burlington. I have given Lieutenant-Colonel Abeel orders to procure wagons and send off all the spare ammunition to Huntington, the heavy cannon to Bordentown. At my arrival at Burlington, I will inquire of the Commodore respecting the matters by you directed.

“ General McDougal's division will quarter here to-night, and march at five in the morning for Burlington. I think there are as many troops gone forward as will be able to get over to-day. I shall push on the troops as fast as possible without injuring their health. I sent forward

one of my aids to Burlington early this morning, to superintend the embarkation of the troops and baggage."

Next morning he writes from Burlington at nine o'clock : —

" Three brigades are now on the march for headquarters, — my division and General Glover's brigade. General McDougal's division is not yet come to town. They had orders to march at four this morning, and I was in hopes they would have been in town by the time Glover's brigade got over the river. I am afraid the want of provision has detained them this morning.

" It is with the utmost difficulty we can get bread to eat. The commissary of purchases of flour is very ill managed ; there is no magazine of consequence, and the army served from hand to mouth. The baggage cannot be got over by to-morrow night.

" Mr. Tench Francis, an uncle of Colonel Tilghman, was brought to me a prisoner this morning ; he was taken at Gloucester. He says Lord Cornwallis's detachment consisted of about six thousand ; that none embarked yesterday ; he also adds that the reinforcement consisted of about twenty-five hundred from New York.

" General Howe designs to make an immediate attack upon the army, unless the weather is bad. This is the general conversation of the officers of all ranks. Mr. Francis says he thinks the enemy design to burn and destroy wherever they go.¹

" Germantown is devoted to destruction. The enemy plundered everybody within their reach, and almost of everything they had. It is the common conversation among the officers of all ranks, that they design to divide our land as soon as the country is conquered.

¹ This proved too true. — See Reed's Life of President Reed.

“The obstinate resistance, they say, made at Mud Island has broke the campaign.”

Again Washington replies immediately:—

“Captain Duplessis has just delivered me yours of this morning from Burlington. Every account from Philadelphia confirms the report that the enemy mean to make a speedy move. I shall not be disappointed if they come out this night or very early in the morning. You will therefore push forward the rear brigades with all possible expedition, and the moment the troops and baggage have all passed, let the boats be instantly sent up the river to Coryell’s Ferry; for one part of my information is that the enemy are preparing to send boats up the Delaware, and it cannot be for any other purpose than to destroy the remainder of our water-craft. I shall be glad that you would come on immediately upon the receipt of this, and send word back to the brigadiers to hasten their march.”¹

And thus ended Greene’s week in the Jerseys. “If an attack can be made on Lord Cornwallis with a prospect of success, I am persuaded it will be done,” wrote Washington to the President of Congress on the 23d.² “General Greene has not been in sufficient force to see Cornwallis in the field,”³ wrote Reed to the President of Pennsylvania on the 30th. And on the same day Cadwallader wrote Reed from head-quarters, “Greene and the detachment from New Jersey are all arrived in camp.” Greene had intended to attack Cornwallis,

¹ See Sparks’s Washington, Vol. V. p. 174.

² Ibid., p. 167.

³ Life of Reed, Vol. I. p. 341.

and had made his disposition, but prudently declined it. The attempt in my opinion was dangerous, as two or three thousand men could have been thrown in his rear, or a reinforcement sent over to Gloucester in the night without notice.”¹ Such were the contemporary judgments of his conduct; and when all the feelings of the day were passed, Marshall, with Washington’s papers before him, wrote: —

“ Washington still hoped to recover much of what had been lost. A victory would restore the Jersey shore, and this object was deemed so important that General Greene’s instructions indicated the expectation that he would be in a condition to fight Lord Cornwallis.

“ That judicious officer feared the reproach of avoiding an action less than the just censure of sacrificing the real interests of his country by engaging the enemy on disadvantageous terms.”²

The expectations of an attack were well founded. On the 4th, the British general came out with all his strength and took post on Chestnut Hill, in front of the right wing of the Americans. On the 11th, Washington, with a touch of humor not unfrequent in his letters, wrote Governor Livingston of New Jersey: —

“ General Howe, after making great preparations and threatening to drive us beyond the mountains, came out with his whole force last Thursday evening, and after manoeuvring round us till the Monday following, decamped very hastily, and marched back to Philadelphia.”³

¹ Life of Reed, Vol. I. p. 349. ² Sparks’s Washington, Vol. V. p. 182.

² Marshall, Vol. I. p. 180.

There was still another reason for Washington's hastening call to Greene. The season was far advanced, the weather was cold, the troops were suffering for want of clothing and shelter, the enemy were already in good winter quarters; but where should the Americans take up theirs? The general sentiment was in favor of a line from Lancaster to Reading. Greene, with Cadwallader and a few others, thought Wilmington a better position. At last, after much discussion, and principally upon the opinions of the gentlemen from Pennsylvania, Washington decided upon Valley Forge. "According to the original plan," writes Reed to President Wharton, "a brigade of Continental troops was to be left with the militia on this side Schuylkill, and (*this plan*), which when I wrote I thought was approved of by his Excellency, has upon other advice been totally changed. General Greene, Cadwallader, and myself had fixed upon this plan as the most eligible to quiet the minds of the people and cover the country."¹

¹ Life, Vol. I. pp. 353, 354.

C H A P T E R X X I V.

Winter March to Valley Forge.—The Valley.—Hut Building.—The Encampment.—Position condemned by De Kalb and Varnum.—Alarm from the Enemy.—Distress of the Army for Food.—Letters.—Discontent.—Congressional Committee.—Greene sent to collect Supplies.—Letters to Washington.

WINTER had set in with more than its wonted severity. The ground was frozen hard, the rivers would soon be frozen also, and snow come to block up the roads and collect in chilling drifts around the tents. Few of the men had blankets, fewer still whole clothes; many had but half a shirt, some none at all; still more were without shoes or covering of any kind to their feet; numbers were compelled to sit up all night by their watch-fires to keep themselves from freezing. The Quartermaster-General had not been near the army since July; the commissaries, in spite of Washington's positive commands, were constantly behind-hand with their supplies of food;¹ the hospitals were full; the graveyards filling daily. There were but eleven thousand and ninety-eight men in the whole army, and of these two thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight were unfit for duty. In

¹ Sparks's Washington, Vol. V. p. 158.

nineteen days, from the 4th to the 23d of December, the ranks "decreased near two thousand men."¹

With these the winter march from Whitemarsh to Valley Forge began; happily not a long one, for it was tracked all the way with blood from the soldiers' bare feet.² A storm held them at Gulph Mills through the 17th. They remained there the 18th also, to keep with becoming solemnity the Thanksgiving which Congress had ordered;³ and on the 19th they reached the humble valley which their sufferings and endurance have made immortal.

It is a "deep, short" valley on the west bank of the Schuylkill, about twenty miles from Philadelphia,⁴ forming "the first step of the hills that reach to North Mountain or the Blue Ridge,"⁵ and just within the circle of operations of the last few weeks. A small creek runs through the upper part of it, turning the wheels of a cotton-factory now, as then it set in motion the trip-hammer of Isaac Potts's forge, from which the valley took its name. The hills that surrounded it were covered with trees; and the whole region was rich in iron ore. The creek and forge may have reminded Greene of his own forge at Coventry,

¹ All of these facts are drawn from Washington's Letters, chiefly Vol. V. December and January, 1777-78.

² Gordon, Vol. III. p. 12, on Washington's authority.

³ Kapp, Kalb's Leben, p. 127.

⁴ Gordon says about sixteen, Vol. III. p. 11. Washington, about twenty, Vol. V.

⁵ Lee, Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department, Vol. I. p. 47.

which also stood on the banks of a pretty stream, with a wooded hill sloping down to the water's edge. But sad anticipations must have come over him as he looked out upon the desolate landscape, and thought how hard it would be to provide daily food for the well and suitable diet for the sick.

Shelter was easier to find ; and soon the men were spreading over the hillsides and through the woods in regular "parties of twelve," cutting down the trees, lopping off the branches, measuring the logs, and, as fast as they were ready, rolling them to the spot marked out for each hut by a superintendent chosen from the field-officers of each brigade. Lucky was the regiment which had most carpenters or woodchoppers in it, and surest to win the twelve dollars' "reward" that Washington had offered "the party in each which finished its hut in the quickest and most workmanlike manner."¹ From morning till night, all through the short winter day, the sound of busy axes was heard in the keen air, mingling with the crash of falling trees and the voices of men ; while up and down through the whole space went the brigade inspectors and regimental inspectors, issuing their orders in the sharp, decided tone of military command, and making sure that each hut was set in the proper line, and built in the proper proportions. And suddenly uprose to the music of these min-

¹ Order of the Day, December 18, the huts.—Washington, Vol. V. p. which contains full specifications for 524.

gled sounds a little town of huts, with its regular streets and avenues; each hut fourteen feet by sixteen, with roof and doors of split oak slabs, with log sides six feet and a half high, made tight with clay, and a chimney of clay and wood rising a foot or two above the roof,—the roof itself a single sharp slope that would shed easily the coming snow. The one door and one window opened upon the street, and the fireplace stood opposite the door.¹ On a line in the rear of the huts of the men were the huts of the officers, larger somewhat, and with two windows. Each general officer had a hut for himself, and another for his staff; each regiment one for its field-officers, and one for the regimental staff; every two companies one for its commissioned officers, and one for every twelve non-commissioned officers and privates. Troops from the same State were lodged in the same street or in the same quarter. In shape the whole resembled a triangle, with Valley Creek forming its irregular base, and the Schuylkill for its left side; or, perhaps, rather a protracted oval, with the hills and woods curving towards each other with a gradual inclination, and abatis, redoubts, and pickets at different points, showing that it was a camp as well as a town. Washington's quarters were in the angle formed by the junction of the river and creek, in the house of a Quaker, Isaac Potts, which is still standing; Greene's, in a hut.

¹ Washington's Order of the Day, December 18, and a manuscript drawing in the Varnum Papers.

It was not without serious misgivings and grave discontent that some of the officers looked upon their winter quarters. "None but an interested speculator or an ill-wisher of the General's," writes De Kalb, "can have suggested to him the idea of wintering in this wilderness."¹ Instead of a camp to rest in, while new recruits were brought forward, and preparations made for taking the field in spring, he looked forward to a hard winter campaign. "Who knows but what we shall meet with a misfortune this winter?"² "It is unparalleled in the history of man," writes Varnum in February, "to establish winter quarters in a country wasted, and without a single magazine."³ How far Greene shared in these gloomy anticipations, there is nothing in his letters to show; but it may safely be assumed that, on this as on every other occasion, having expressed his own opinion frankly, he acted cordially and earnestly in carrying out the decision of the Commander-in-chief.

The day of trial was close at hand. On the afternoon of the 22d intelligence came that a strong foraging party of the enemy was "advancing towards Derby." Orders were immediately issued for the troops to hold themselves in readiness to march against it.

"When, behold," writes Washington, "to my great mortification, I was not only informed, but convinced, that

¹ Kapp's De Kalb, p. 129.

in Sparks's Washington, Vol. V. p.

² *Ut sup.*

240, but not among the Greene or

³ Letter to General Greene, quoted

Varnum Papers.

the men were unable to stir on account of provision, and that a dangerous mutiny begun the night before, and which with difficulty was suppressed by the spirited exertions of some officers, was still much to be apprehended for want of this article. This brought forth the only commissary in the purchasing line in this camp ; and with him this melancholy and alarming truth, that he had not a single hoof of any kind to slaughter, and not more than twenty-five barrels of flour ! From hence form an opinion of our situation when I add, that he could not tell when to expect any.”¹

But what if Howe himself should come out again ? Shall we go and meet him on his own ground, when we once let him come within a mile of us without attacking him ? “The attempt will be exceeding hazardous and the success doubtful,” said most of the general officers whom Sullivan consulted by Washington’s directions. But for himself, he said, “I am so weary of the infernal clamor of the Pennsylvanians, that I am for satisfying them at all events, and risking every consequence in an action. Possibly we may be successful ; if not, they may be satisfied ; and even Congress itself may gain experience, and learn to censure with more caution.”²

The alarm from the enemy passed, but the more serious anxiety caused by the just discontent of officers and men was not so easily removed.

“It gives me the greatest pain,” writes Greene to Washington on the 1st of January, “to hear the mur-

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. V. p. 197. ² Sparks’s Correspondence of the Revolution, Vol. II. p. 63.

murs and complaints among the officers for the want of spirits. They say they are exposed to the severity of the weather, subject to hard duty, and nothing but bread and beef to eat morning, noon, and night, without vegetables, or anything to drink but cold water; this is hard fare for people that have been accustomed to live tolerably.

“ The officers observe, however disagreeable their situation, they would patiently submit to their hard fortune, if the evil in its own nature was incurable; but they think by proper exertions spirits may be procured to alleviate their distress until they have an opportunity to provide for themselves.

“ Lord Stirling was mentioning yesterday that he had made a discovery of a considerable quantity of spirits, sufficient to supply all the officers. Supposing his Lordship’s information to be true, will it not be consistent with good policy to seize it and distribute it among the regiments for the use of the officers,—about thirty or forty gallons for each regiment? This would give a temporary relief, and the present dissatisfaction seems to be so great, it is absolutely necessary to take some measures, if possible, to silence as many of the complaints as may be. Colonel Abeel has just returned from Bethlehem, and says there are sixteen hogsheads of spirits at that place belonging to the old commissary department; it is in the hands of Mr. Oakley, and was sent there by Mr. Ervin. Colonel Abeel thinks it will be disposed of for private property, if not sent for immediately. Colonel Abeel also observes there are great quantities of whiskey sent into the Jerseys at Easton, and that a full supply might be had for the use of the army if some person was sent there to seize.”¹

A severe commentary this upon the Commissary department, and forming, with Washington’s letter

¹ Greene Papers, January, 1778.

of the 22d of December, a picture that might well have made Tories exult and Whigs tremble. It was evident that this state of things could not continue much longer. “Unless some great and capital change suddenly takes place in that line, this army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things, — starve, dissolve, or disperse, in order to obtain subsistence in the best manner they can.”¹

To add to Greene’s own discomforts, he was suffering from “a very disagreeable pain in one of his eyes.” How he felt as he revolved all these things in his mind he tells us himself, in a letter of January 3d to his brother Jacob : —

“ Our army are tenting themselves ; they are almost worn out with fatigue, and greatly distressed for want of clothing, particularly the article of shoes and stockings. The present mode of clothing the army will always leave us without a sufficient supply. The change in the Commissary department has been a very distressing circumstance ; the army has been fed from hand to mouth ever since Mr. Trumbull left it. Our operations have been greatly retarded from the situation of the Commissary department. The Quartermaster-General’s department also has been in a most wretched condition. General Mifflin, who ought to have been at the head of the business, has never been with the army since it came into the State.

“ The Congress have lately appointed Colonel Wilkinson to the rank of a brigadier, and Brigadier-General Conway to the rank of major-general. Both these appointments are exceedingly disgusting to the army ; the

¹ Sparks’s Washington, Vol. V. p. 197.

first to the colonels, the last to the brigadiers. The army is exceedingly convulsed by these appointments, and God knows what will be the issue! Almost all the colonels in the army will resign in consequence of Wilkinson's appointment. General Gates is exceedingly blamed for recommending the measure.

“ General Conway is a man of much intrigue and little judgment. He is a great incendiary, of a restless spirit, and always contriving to puff himself off to the public as an officer of great consequence. He left the army under pretence of going to France, alleging for reason that there was the greatest probability of a French war, and that he should injure his interests by staying here. Everybody in the army thought he was gone. But he stole away to Congress, got in with some of the court faction to trumpet his consequence to the Congress, and they hastily appointed him a major-general, to the prejudice of the brigadiers, who, to a man, will resign their commissions if he holds his rank and remains in the army. This appointment appears to have been obtained by such low artifices that everybody despises him for it. The Marquis Lafayette, and all the other French gentlemen, will hardly speak to him. He is the greatest novice in war, in everything but disciplining a regiment, that ever I saw. He is by no means of an enterprising military turn of mind, and of very little activity. This is the true character of the man, and yet he is palmed off upon the public, by little arts, as the first military man upon the continent.

“ Our cause is sure if we do not get divided among ourselves. But there is great danger that we shall. Men of great ambition, and without principle or virtue, will sacrifice everything to their private views. The army in general has been very well united; but I am afraid the injudicious appointments made in Congress will ruin it.

“ You mention my letter to Governor Cook, in which I

pronounce the division in the British force as a fortunate circumstance for America. The events of the campaign have verified it. And had our force been equal to General Howe's, or at least as much superior as the Northern army was to Burgoyne's, he must have shared the same fate. But, alas ! we have fought with vastly superior numbers, and, although twice defeated, have kept the field. History affords but few examples of the kind. The people may think there has not been enough done, but our utmost endeavors have not been wanting. Our army, with inferior numbers, badly found, badly clothed, worse fed, and newly levied, must have required good generalship to triumph over superior numbers well found, well clothed, well fed, and veteran soldiers. We cannot conquer the British force at once, but they cannot conquer us at all. The limits of the British government in America are their out-sentinels.

“ Reports prevail very strongly again of a French war. I honestly confess to you I do not believe it, for France can have no pretext for declaring war, and certainly it is not the interest of Great Britain to do it. But, nevertheless, it may happen. I wish Congress may not be lulled into security from their late successes to the North, and their hopes of a French explosion. It is our business to levy a new army as soon as possible ; each State to furnish its proportion by a draft. There is no such thing as filling the army by voluntary énlistments as speedily as will be necessary to open the campaign to advantage. Each State will be compelled hereafter to furnish clothing for their own troops. The present mode of clothing the army is ruinous. We have had three thousand soldiers unfit for duty for want of clothing this fall and winter. The Rhode Island troops have done themselves great honor this campaign. Colonel Greene's character is in high estimation. Major Thayer distinguished himself at

Fort Mifflin, and has acquired universal applause. Your troops are generally exceedingly well officered from the northward this year. General Gates is a child of fortune; the successes to the northward are all glorious. General Arnold and General Lincoln are in high esteem; and it is said General Burgoyne gives Arnold the credit for the successes obtained over him.

“I am happy that the work is but done. I do not care who does it. But I should like to have a hand in the mischief.

“I have no hope of coming home this winter; the General will not grant me permission. Mrs. Greene is coming to camp. We are all going into log-huts,—a sweet life after a most fatiguing campaign.”

A few days later we find him once more addressing Congress upon the subject of promotions; not for his own sake, for the elevation of Conway and Wilkinson left his rank uninvaded, but for the army’s sake, and the sake of sound principles. It was a delicate subject to touch upon, with Du Coudray’s affair so fresh in the memory of Congress. Nothing was easier than to raise the cry of military dictation, and hold him up to the country as undertaking to give law to the civil authority. All this he knew, and, weighing it carefully in his own mind, decided that his duty required of him a frank and full statement of the question. It is more than probable that, before putting hand to his pen, he took counsel with Washington, even if it was not at Washington’s suggestion that he wrote.

“I would take the liberty,” he writes, “of addressing

Congress, through you, upon a subject which appears to me of great importance ; and which, in my opinion, deserves the most serious attention. It is the present prevailing discontent among the officers in two capital lines of the army ; to wit, the colonels and brigadiers. I am to say this discontent has arisen to such a height, and is so general, as to forebode the most alarming consequences.

“ This dissatisfaction proceeds principally from some promotions which have taken place lately, by which the officers in those lines respectively conceive themselves most materially and essentially injured in their rank ; the first more particularly in the promotion of Colonel Wilkinson, the last in that of Brigadier-General Conway to the rank of major-general. They feel the force of the injury doubly in these instances from being superseded by those who had served in subordinate stations. I cannot pretend to say upon what principle those gentlemen were promoted ; but I doubt whether the advantages resulting from their rise will answer the flattering expectations of Congress in their appointments. I do not wish to lessen their merit, but I believe it is generally thought their promotions have been to the prejudice of others at least as deserving as themselves, and who had superior claims in every other point of view.

“ The officers of the army say they engaged in the service of their country, not only from a sense of duty as citizens, but with the fullest confidence that the justice of Congress would secure to them their rank, and the right of promotion according to the rules which prevail in all well-regulated armies. If they conceive these principles to be violated, if they lose their confidence in the justice of Congress, it is easy to foresee the fatal effects that will result. Military ardor will languish ; a spirit of enterprise will cease ; men of honor will decline the service ;

art and cabal will succeed, and low intrigue will be the characteristic and genius of the army.

“I am persuaded, Sir, the army is not blind to merit, neither are they averse to measures calculated to promote their true political interest, the interest and happiness of their country ; the former they wish to be rewarded, and the latter ever attended to. But with difficulty they will be brought to confess merit in officers from their appointment which never has been discovered in the field.

“That the Congress should have the power to reward is acknowledged by all, and that great political reasons will justify the introducing officers in some instances, and promoting them in others out of the common line, none can deny. However, merit and the reasons of state in such cases should be obvious. If they are not, the promotion will be viewed with disgust. Under the above distinction I am happy to mention the Marquis de Lafayette. This nobleman’s generous, disinterested conduct, his sacrifices to our cause, and his great merit, gave him a just claim to an honorable notice.

“I have delivered my sentiments with great candor on this important occasion ; the subject demanded it, duty required it. I am not personally affected by the injuries complained of, nor am I immediately interested in any manner but as a man whose only wish is to promote the happiness of his country.”¹

How serious the question was Congress had a present opportunity of judging, for letters from nine brigadiers were read on the same day with Greene’s, the 19th, and Washington’s opinion was known to accord with theirs. Still, the faction of which I have

¹ Greene Papers, Letter to President of Congress, Valley Forge, January 12, 1778.

already spoken, and soon shall have occasion to speak again, was at its height. Conway had many friends in Congress ; Gates had just been put at the head of the Board of War ; Wilkinson had been appointed Secretary. The letters were ordered to lie upon the table ; and as the war went on Greene had reason, on more than one occasion, to believe that his letter at least was neither forgotten nor forgiven.

The question of the army was daily becoming more urgent. The system of short enlistments had been abandoned. It had been resolved henceforth to engage men for three years or for the war. But when the remedy came, the evils of the original organization had swollen to alarming proportions. Not the least of those evils was the reliance placed upon the militia, who, coming out for short terms of service, brought with them to camp the independence of civil life, wasting in a few weeks supplies that would have carried disciplined men through a campaign, and deterring hundreds from enlisting in the regular army by the high prices which they paid for substitutes.¹ A deep-seated discontent was spreading among the officers of every rank. "No day, nor scarce an hour passes," wrote Washington in December, "without the offer of a resigned commission."² When the war began an officer's pay was sufficient for all his wants ; but now, the frugal

¹ How unfavorably this impressed foreign officers may be seen by a letter of De Kalb in Kapp's Life of that general, p. 130.

² Sparks's Washington, Vol. V. p. 201.

De Kalb tells us that with all his economy he "had to pay his host two hundred and forty-two francs for a fortnight's supply of milk."¹ Depreciation was already within twelve months of the point when a member of Congress was "asked four hundred dollars for a hat, three hundred for a pair of leather breeches, one hundred and twenty-five for a pair of shoes, and a suit of clothes sixteen hundred."² Roused at length by the remonstrances of the Commander-in-chief, Congress took the matter seriously in hand, and sent a committee of six of its members to camp with full powers to examine the subject and propose the necessary reforms.³ Two of Greene's personal friends, Reed and Gouverneur Morris, were on this committee; on which we find another name familiar to the statesmen and lawyers of that day, — Francis Dana, familiar to the men of the last and the present generation by the poetical honors of his son, and the literary and professional honors of his grandson. Washington, having collected, as was his custom, the opinions of his general officers, and carefully considered them, laid the result before the committee in an elaborate report upon the state of the army.⁴

Meanwhile, the people of Rhode Island were living in constant alarm from the continued occupation of Newport and the Island by the enemy. General Spencer, whose failure in the projected

¹ *Ut sup.* 134.

³ See Journals of Congress, 1778,

² Life of Samuel Adams, Vol. III. January 10, 13, and 20.
p. 51, a work of great interest and value.

⁴ Sparks's Washington, Vol. V. p.

525, and note.

expedition of the preceding summer, had given rise to serious doubts of his qualifications for so important a command, had sent in his resignation, and Congress accepting it with suggestive promptness, resolved that his place should immediately be filled by an officer of equal rank. Governor Cooke and his advisers naturally fixed their eyes upon Greene.¹

"Governor Cooke wrote me a few days since," he writes to his brother Jacob on the 7th of February, "a most alarming letter respecting the situation of Rhode Island. Mr. Ellery² proposed to me to take the command there, provided it was agreeable to his Excellency; but he is totally averse to the measure. General Spencer has resigned: who will take the command I know not. I wish General Sullivan may, as I can think of no person who will do it more justice. I am in hopes to prevail on the General to let the Rhode Island troops return home and there continue until the enemy leaves the State. I flatter myself they will fill up their ranks very soon if they go home with that understanding."³

All this while the army was still living from hand to mouth, one day without bread, another without meat, and often upon the verge of finding themselves without either meat or bread.⁴ Washington had been invested with extensive powers to lay the country under contribution, but was reluctant to use them.⁵ The inhabitants over a wide circuit and

¹ Journals of Congress, January 13, 1778.

² William Ellery, who, upon the death of Samuel Ward, had been chosen to take his place in Congress.

³ See also a letter of February 5, 1778, to Governor Cooke.

⁴ Washington to Governor Clinton. Sparks, Vol. V. p. 240.

⁵ Washington to President of Congress.—Sparks, Vol. V. p. 209. For the feeling of Congress, compare Journals of Congress, December 10, 1777.

all around the camp were deeply disaffected, and consequently unwilling to give their cattle and grain for American certificates when they could always get British gold for them at Philadelphia.¹ Never since the retreat through the Jerseys had the disaffection seemed so wide-spread or so alarming; never had the army been so close upon dissolution. Washington resolved to send out a large party, and seize by the strong hand whatever could not be had by purchase. Greene was put in command of it,—a painful duty; but from the beginning of the contest he had held that war was a state of violence, subject to laws of its own, and they who were not for their country were against her. How vigorously he acted up to this principle his own letters show.

“ We are posted at this place,” he writes from headquarters,—Springfield Meeting-house, February 14, 1778,²—“ and purpose to collect all the cattle, carriages, &c., &c., in and about the neighborhood to-day; to-morrow we purpose to take post at one Edwards’s, about six miles in our rear. We have ordered all the collections made to-day to Edwards’s Tavern to-night. I must beg you to exert yourself in obtaining forage, otherwise the business will go on slow. Tell all the wagoners and the officers that have the superintendence of the wagons that I will punish the least neglect with the greatest severity. You must forage the country naked, and, to prevent their complaint of the want of forage, we must take all their cattle,

¹ Sparks’s Life of Gouverneur Morris. Morris to Jay, Vol. I. p. 154. Reed to President Wharton. Life of Joseph Reed, Vol. I. p. 358. Washington to Colonel W. Stewart.—Sparks’s Washington, Vol. V. p. 222.

² Probably to Colonel Biddle, among whose papers the original was found, though without address.

sheep, and horses fit for the use of the army. Let us hear from you and know how you go on."

Reports come in, but not as favorable reports as he had hoped for. At half past three of the same day he again writes to Colonel Biddle:—

"I received two letters from you within an hour past. I am very sorry to find so small a collection of wagons. Search the country through and through. Mount your pressing parties on horses for expedition's sake. Harden your heart and despatch business as fast as possible. I have got many parties out collecting wagons, horses, cattle, hogs, and sheep. The wagons I shall forward to you as fast as they come in. We have made considerable collection of horses, and I think it will be best to send them to camp to-night, that as many wagons may be rigged out as possible, to come on forage.

"I think I shall move from this position to-night or to-morrow morning; we are in the midst of a d—d nest of Tories, and as we are in the neighborhood of the enemy, a change of position becomes necessary for security's sake."

He did not change his position, however, till the next day, and in the course of the morning he wrote to Washington:—

"We are in want of some of the deputy quartermaster-generals to conduct the business of that department; please to send us one. I received two letters from Colonel Biddle; he has got but few wagons; the inhabitants conceal them; the Colonel complains bitterly of the disaffection of the people. I sent out a great number of small parties to collect the cattle, horses, &c., yesterday, but the collection was inconsiderable; the country is very much drained; the inhabitants cry out and beset me from all

quarters ; but like Pharaoh I harden my heart. Two men were taken up carrying in provisions to the enemy yesterday morning. I gave them a hundred each by way of example. I have sent off all the cattle, sheep, and horses. I will send on the forage and all further collections that may be made as fast as possible. I determine to forage the country very bare. Nothing shall be left unattempted.

“ As provision will be scarce, especially of the meat kind, if the commissaries could purchase a quantity of sugar, the troops, with wheat, might make a fermity ; a diet that would contribute to their health, be palatable and nourishing to the troops. I think it would be a very good substitute for meat, and not much more expensive if any.

“ Lieutenant-Colonel Ballard was out on a foraging business yesterday down about Derby, and got intelligence that the enemy’s bridge (was) being removed, and that it was with difficulty they relieved their guards, being some hours about it. He solicited a party to attempt the guard ; upon his earnest entreaty I granted his request. Enclosed is his report, by which you will see the attempt was unsuccessful.

“ I hope the committee of Congress will not lose sight of Colonel Cox ; there is no man will serve their purpose better. Your Excellency may remember I named Mr. Lott for that department ; please to name him to the committee.”

From this closing paragraph it would seem that the negotiations which placed him — sorely against his will — at the head of the quartermaster-general’s department were already begun.

In the evening of the same day he wrote to

Washington again from his new quarters at Providence Meeting-House. His foraging parties were still out scouring the country ; but says he :—

“ I am afraid there will be nothing considerable, as the country appears much drained. Hay is the plentifullest article that there is in the country ; sixty or seventy tons may be had in this neighborhood. . . . To-morrow we shall mount a press party on horses to press wagons the back of Brandywine. The inhabitants hereabouts if they have any wagons or harness they conceal them.”

Ballard’s attempt, though unsuccessful, seems to have been well planned and judiciously conducted. Even a partial success at this moment would have had a good moral effect upon the army, and was well worth the trial.

“ I am sorry,” he writes to Greene, “ to inform you that my scheme has proved ineffectual ; the enemy had by some means got knowledge of our march ; indeed, we saw a light-horseman ride on to give the news when we had approached within about five hundred yards. We then pushed on as hard as possible, but found them secured in the stone house. They began a very heavy fire before we got within one hundred yards, which was very warmly returned on our part till we got within fifty yards, but conceiving it impracticable to force them out of the house, I ordered my men to retreat. They behaved exceeding brave, and would, I believe, have attempted staving the doors. Major Cable’s party, who went on the lower side next the Schuylkill, fell in with a small party ; he thinks he killed several of them. The poor fellows are exceeding fatigued, and would be glad of some whiskey. I directed the officers of each respective corps to make out a

return for whiskey. Many of them say they have n't had a mouthful of meat these four days. I am so worsted I cannot wait upon you at your quarters. My party met with but little loss, four or five slightly wounded, and I believe one or two killed."

On the 16th Greene again writes to Washington, the pen having now to take the place of the daily intercourse of camp.

"I received your Excellency's answer by Colonel Hamilton to mine of yesterday morning. I wrote you again last evening proposing the burning the hay on the Jersey shore, also another forage in Bucks County. Upon revolving the matter over in my mind, I think the following would be the best plan to execute it upon. Wagons cannot be got in this country, and to attempt to collect them in Bucks County will explain our intentions too early for the safety of the party. I would, therefore, propose a press-warrant to be sent to Colonel Smith at Lancaster, and for him to apply to the executive council for a hundred wagons to be got ready in three days; and in case they don't furnish them by that time, that Colonel Smith collect the wagons with his press-warrant; but if your Excellency thinks our situation will justify dispensing with an application to the executive council, the press-warrant will be the most speedy and certain method of getting the complement of wagons seasonably. These wagons, when collected, to be loaded with forage in some of the best hay towns between camp and Lancaster, and upon their arrival in camp to be immediately taken upon a forage into Bucks County. The business in this way can be conducted with so much secrecy and despatch that it will be difficult for the enemy to defeat it.

"I will do everything in my power here, but the face

of the country is strongly marked with poverty and distress. All of the cattle, and most of the best horses, have been carried into the city. The few Whigs that are here say there has been great numbers drove along for Philadelphia market. We take all the horses and cattle, hogs and sheep fit for use ; but the country has been so gleaned, that there is but little left in it.

“ Your Excellency’s letter of this day this moment came to hand. I had given orders to all the press parties to bring the inhabitants prisoners that concealed their cattle or carriages, and examples shall not be wanting to facilitate the business I am out upon.

“ Captain Lee this moment writes of the increasing distress of the army for want of provisions. God grant we may never be brought to such a wretched condition again. General Wayne will cross over into the Jerseys from Wilmington, to execute the design of destroying the hay and driving in all the stock from the shores, which he proposes to forward on to camp by the shortest and safest route. But this will not afford an immediate relief. I shall send into camp this night everything I can collect. By this detachment my party will be much diminished. Great numbers have already been sent home that have fallen sick and got their feet sore in marching. I think it will be best, therefore, to send two of my field-officers to camp, they being altogether useless to me.”

“ I sent to camp yesterday,” he writes from Providence Meeting-house on the 17th, “ near fifty head of cattle. I wish it had been in my power to have sent more ; but the inhabitants have taken the alarm, and concealed their stock in such manner that it is difficult finding any. They have done the same with their wagons and harness. Our poor fellows are obliged to search all the woods and swamps without success. I have given orders

to give no receipts for anything they find concealed, and to notify the people accordingly.

“ Colonel Harmer is gone with a party on the back of the forks of the Brandywine, a little above the route of the enemy. General Wayne is gone to Wilmington in order to cross over into the Jerseys; but if the ice won’t permit him to pass, he is to make a large circuit, and come in by the way of Goshen. Colonel Spencer is gone to the township of Goshen, to rendezvous at the meeting-house, to collect cattle, &c. I shall continue here until the impressed wagons, and all those from camp are loaded; but I am afraid there will be but few to what our wants demand, and what might be loaded here with hay. Grain there is but little to be got.

“ The business I am upon is very disagreeable; but I should be happy in executing it, if our success was equal to our wants. The teams that come into camp, that are not for the ordinary duties of it, should never be suffered to continue there all night, if it can possibly be avoided. If they can get only a few miles into the country, they can get forage for their cattle. The transportation has become one of the most difficult parts of the business of foraging, for forage is really plentier than teams. We have collected a considerable number of horses; but the officers, in spite of everything I can say to them, will bring in many that are unfit for our purpose. All such we shall notify the inhabitants to come and take them again. The Whigs here are afraid to give any information respecting the Tories for fear that when we are gone they will be carried prisoners into Philadelphia.

“ I am afraid we have lost one of our small parties that was sent out to collect cattle from Springfield meeting-house. The party was sent from Colonel Shepard’s division, commanded by one Romsdell (an ex-

ceeding good officer, Colonel Sheppard says), and consisted of twenty odd men; they went out day before yesterday morning and have never returned. How they could have fallen into the enemy's hands I can't imagine, for I have never heard of their being out.

"I think the officer must have got lost, and fallen in with the enemy's picket at the Ferry, before he knew where he was. Or else his men must have made him a prisoner, and carried in to the enemy, which I don't think improbable, for most of his party were Virginia convicts.

"If the enemy had been out and attacked him, it's ten to one but some of the party might have got off. It's possible the soldiers might kill the officer and go in themselves; but by what means he or his party has fallen into the enemy's hands I am not able to conjecture; but I am well convinced they have by their not returning, and by an account I have from the city of such a party being marched through it, the evening of the day they went out. The intelligence says there was no officer with the men, which makes me apprehend foul play; but it's all conjecture.

"Colonel Ballard's report did not prove true; there was not a man of his killed; five were slightly wounded; he killed one Hessian, and mortally wounded another; two of his men on their march deserted.

"The enemy are getting ready for a grand forage somewhere. The inhabitants think, from many circumstances, they intended it on this side, but I imagine they will alter their plan now, if they designed it before. I have no doubt of Bucks County being their object. We have burnt all the hay upon Tinewin Island, and the other little islands about it. The quantity was very considerable; we got a number of very good horses from all the islands."

His mind was soon relieved from its apprehensions for the safety of Romsdell and his party, as we see by a letter of the next day:—

“ I wrote your Excellency yesterday, that I was afraid we had lost one of our small parties, but they came in a few minutes after I sent the letter off. Has there been any great desertions from camp, or any report of prisoners made on the other side of the Schuylkill ?

“ I am persuaded there was some of our prisoners paraded for some purpose. If there has been no report of any being lately taken, they have paraded some of our prisoners from the jails, to make the inhabitants believe they had taken a considerable part of the party that attacked their picket.

“ The time for which I came out expires to-night ; but as the foraging business has been greatly obstructed for want of wagons, it will be necessary for me to continue a few days longer. I wish to know your Excellency’s pleasure respecting the matter, that I may govern myself accordingly.

“ I am told by the inhabitants that one Mr. James, that lives a few miles from this place, has enlisted near a hundred men from this county. There has gone fifteen from the town of Goshen. This corps is for cavalry. Most of them have found means to get horses. These are the reports of the Whigs here.

“ I am persuaded there has been too little attention paid to the branding the Continental horses. Brands would prevent their being stolen or exchanged ; but the wagon-masters must be strictly forbid exchanging the branded horses for others only for a temporary relief,— both parties often suffer by the exchange,— the countryman often has his branded horse taken from him ; and the wagoner sells the other, or sends it away by some of

his comrades after a few days' service. Indeed, I think if every horse that belongs to the Continental teams that fails upon the road, and others pressed to supply their places, were immediately branded and paid for, the continent would be subject to less expense than they now are, and the inhabitants receive less injury. One of the wagon-masters told me there were forty or fifty teams expected into this neighborhood from camp last night. I am very glad of it, as few are to be got about here."

And now this painful duty was nearly fulfilled. One letter from Providence Meeting-house on the 20th, and he returns to camp.

"General Wayne wrote me last evening that all his troops had crossed over the river Delaware into the Jerseys. He intends to collect all the stock and burn all the hay along the river that will be within the reach of the enemy. If he executes the business effectually, the only chance the enemy will have for foraging will be between Schuylkill and the Delaware. I am told there is considerable hay upon the Delaware, at a place called Point-no-point, which may be burnt. The enemy have got a great part of it away, but there is still remaining a large quantity. It would be well worth while to attempt to destroy it, for everybody that comes from the city agrees they are very short of forage.

"Colonel Biddle wrote me last evening he had loaded forty wagons yesterday. We want nothing but wagons to make a grand forage; there is great plenty of hay a little below Marcus Hook. Captain Lee was at Wilmington yesterday. He said he was out after cattle. Colonel Spencer wrote me from Goshen last night there was but few cattle to be got there. I have not heard from Colonel Harmer since he set off for the forks of the

Brandywine, but have heard of cattle going to camp from that quarter, and therefore suppose they were sent by him. Many people in this county refuse certificates for their horses and cattle. The next move I make from here I shall order home all the troops except one division; they will be so remote from the enemy that there will be little or no danger from them, and the country will be pretty well gleaned. One division will be a sufficient cover against any attempt from their light-horse, and they will be too remote for the foot to attempt anything by surprise.

“ I have quartered the troops constantly in houses, (so) that they have suffered very little,—only from the heavy marches they have gone through in collecting cattle, &c.”

And thus ended Greene’s first forage.

“ I have just returned,” he writes to Knox on the 26th of February, “ from foraging in Chester and its environs. My orders were to collect all the horses fit for cavalry or draft, the cattle, sheep, and hogs fit for killing, together with the carriages and harness fit for Continental use. I executed my orders with the greatest fidelity. I was out ten or eleven days, which prevented my writing you by the last post.

“ I must beg your pardon for not writing you before, but I have put it off from time to time to learn the determination of the committee of Congress respecting the establishment of the army. The matter is now gone to Congress, and I believe strongly recommended by the committee, but I am well persuaded from many circumstances that it will be rejected.

“ A mystical darkness has spread over the councils of America and prevents her counsellors from seeing her true interest.

“ The army has been in great distress since you left it ; the troops are getting naked, and they were seven days without bread. Such patience and moderation as they manifested under their sufferings does the highest honor to the magnanimity of the American soldiers. The seventh day they came before their superior officers and told their sufferings in as respectful terms as if they had been humble petitioners for special favors ; they added that it would be impossible to continue in camp any longer without support. Happily, relief arrived from the little collections I had made and some others, and prevented the army from disbanding. We are still in danger of starving ; the commissary’s department is in a most wretched condition, the quartermaster’s in a worse. Hundreds and hundreds of our horses have actually starved to death. The committee of Congress have seen all these things with their own eyes.”

CHAPTER XXV.

Momentary Relief of the Army. — Greene's daily Duties. — Social Life in Camp. — Lafayette, Steuben, Duponceau, De Kalb, Fleury, &c. — Appearance of the Encampment. — What Men talked about. — Rhode Island's Negro Regiment. — Steuben's Arrival and first Steps in disciplining the Army.

FOR the moment the army was relieved. “I have heard lately by persons from the army,” writes William Greene of Warwick, soon after Governor of Rhode Island, “that they are now well fed, which has afforded me much satisfaction, as I am convinced, and that long since, that, under God, our all depends (upon) making them comfortable, so as to create in them a cheerful inclination to carry on our reasonable and very necessary defence.”¹ Still, the relief was but momentary, and, glad as Greene was to escape from the unwelcome duty of foraging, his feelings were still severely tried by the sight of sufferings which he could not alleviate. The daily round of his duties even was not without annoyance, for it brought him into daily contact with evils which he had foreseen from the beginning, and constantly though vainly striven to avert. But there was work to do, and he was “never so happy as when” at work.

¹ Letter of Governor Greene to General Greene, March 6, 1778.

Every fourth day he was officer of the day,¹ with posts to visit, orders to issue and superintend, and reports to make and receive. Then, too, there were councils of war, courts-martial, and, withal, the special duties of his own division. Even the laborious De Kalb complained that he had hardly a free hour.² Most of this, however, was routine work, with nothing in it to satisfy a mind that loved thought. But for that higher element of his nature he found abundant occupation in his relations with Washington, which required him to study all the questions of administration and organization from that comprehensive point of view to which he was naturally led by his fondness for political science and its applications in history. Of the nature of this daily communication some idea, as I have already said, may be formed from his letters to Washington during their occasional separations; and it was doubtless in part from the opportunity of witnessing these communications, which his own confidential relations to the Commander-in-chief gave him, that Hamilton was led to form that exalted estimate of Greene's intellectual powers of which he has left so emphatic an expression in his eulogy.³

But even Valley Forge had its recreations. "Several general officers are sending for their wives," writes Lafayette to his own, "and I envy them, not their wives, but the happiness of being

¹ Kapp's De Kalb, p. 128.

² *Ut sup.*

³ Hamilton's Works, Vol. II, p.

482.

where they can see them.”¹ Mrs. Greene had joined her husband early in January, bringing with her her summer’s acquisition, a stock of French, that quickly made her little parlor the favorite resort of foreign officers.² There was often to be seen Lafayette, not yet turned of twenty-one, though a husband, a father, and a major-general; graver somewhat in his manners than strictly belonged either to his years or his country; and loved and trusted by all, by Washington and Greene especially. Steuben, too, was often there, wearing his republican uniform, as, fifteen years before, he had worn the uniform of the despotic Frederick; as deeply skilled in the ceremonial of a court as in the manœuvring of an army; with a glittering star on his left breast, that bore witness to the faithful service he had rendered in his native Germany; and revolving in his accurate mind designs which were to transform this mass of physical strength which Americans had dignified with the name of army into a real army which Frederick himself might have accepted. He had but little English at his command as yet, but at his side there was a mercurial young Frenchman, Peter Duponceau, who knew how to interpret both his graver thoughts and the lighter gallantries with which the genial old soldier loved to season his intercourse with the wives and daughters of his new fellow-citizens. As the years passed away,

¹ Lafayette Memoirs, Vol. I. p. 147. moirs, MSS., communicated to me by Mr. Kapp.

² Extracts from Duponceau’s Me-

Duponceau himself became a celebrated man, and loved to tell the story of these checkered days. Another German, too, De Kalb, was sometimes seen there, taller, statelier, graver than Steuben, with the cold, observant eye of the diplomatist, rather than the quick glance of the soldier, though a soldier too, and a brave and skilful one; caring very little about the cause he had forsaken his noble chateau and lovely wife to fight for, but a great deal about the promotion and decorations which his good service here was to win him in France; for he had made himself a Frenchman, and served the King of France, and bought him French lands and married a French wife. Already before this war began, he had come hither in the service of France to study the progress of the growing discontent; and now he was here again an American major-general, led partly by the ambition of rank, partly by the thirst of distinction, but much, too, by a certain restlessness of nature, and longing for excitement and action, not to be wondered at in one who had fought his way up from a butlership to a barony.¹ He and Steuben had served on opposite sides during the Seven Years' War, though born both of them on the same bank of the Rhine; and though when Steuben first came De Kalb was at Albany, yet in May they must have met more than once. How did they feel towards each other, the soldier of Frederick and the soldier of Louis? If we had known more about this, we

¹ Kapp's De Kalb, p. 2.

should have known better, perhaps, why Lafayette, a fast friend of De Kalb, speaks of “the methodic mediocrity”¹ of Steuben, and Steuben of the “vanity and presumption” of the young major-general.

In the same circle, too, was the young Fleury whom we have seen bearing himself so gallantly at Fort Mifflin, and who, a year after, was to render still more brilliant service at Stony Point; and the Marquis de la Rouerie, concealing his rank under the name of Armand, and combating an unsuccessful love by throwing himself headlong into the tumult of war;² and Mauduit Duplessis, whose skill as an engineer had been proved at Red Bank, and who about this time was brevetted Lieutenant-Colonel, at Washington’s recommendation, for “gallant conduct at Brandywine and Germantown,” and “distinguished services at Fort Mercer,” and “a degree of modesty not always found in men who have performed brilliant actions,”³ but whom neither modesty nor gallantry could save from a fearful death at San Domingo; and Gimat, aid to Lafayette now, but who afterwards led Lafayette’s van as colonel in the successful assault of the British redoubts at Yorktown; and La Colombe, who was to serve Lafayette faithfully in France as he served him here; and Ternant, distinguished in America, France, and Holland, but who this year rendered invaluable service to

¹ *Lafayette Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 49. 214, and *Journals of Congress*, January 19, 1778.

² *Ibid.*, 74.

³ *Sparks’s Washington*, Vol. V. p.

American discipline by his aid in carrying out the reforms of Steuben. Kosciusko was in the North, but Poland had still another representative, the gallant Pulaski, who had done good service during the last campaign, and who the very next year was to lay down his life for us at the siege of Savannah.

Washington, too, and his wife were often seen in this evening circle,—not the grave, cold Washington of some books, but a human being, who knew how to laugh heartily and smile genially; and the courtly Morris and the brilliant Reed were there, and Charles Carroll, who was to outlive them nearly all; and Knox, whom Greene loved as a brother, and Hamilton and Laurens, as often as their duty would permit; and Wayne and Varnum and Sullivan, and many others of whom history tells, with some of whom she has kept no record; all equally glad to escape, for a while, from stern duties and grave cares to a cheerful fireside and genial conversation. There was no room for dancing in these narrow quarters, but next winter at Morristown we shall find a good deal of it, and see Washington dancing four hours with Mrs. Greene without once sitting down.¹ There were no cards either. All games of chance had been prohibited early in the war,² and American officers, even if they had had the means and inclination, had no opportunity, to ruin themselves as the officers of Howe's army were ruining themselves at Philadelphia this very

¹ Greene Papers.

² Sparks's Washington, Vol. III. p. 296, Vol. IV. p. 436.

winter. But there was tea or coffee, and pleasant conversation always, and music often, no one who had a good voice being allowed to refuse a song. Few could give more interest to a story or life to an anecdote than Mrs. Greene, and no one in those evening circles could excel her in adapting her subject and manner to the taste and manner of the immediate listener.¹ And thus again somewhat of the gentleness of domestic life was shed over these stern scenes of war, and somewhat of its cheerfulness brought into these narrow dwellings; of themselves "no gayer," writes Lafayette, "than a dungeon."²

Out of doors all was more like a dungeon still; for the bleak hills shut them in on one side, the frozen river on the other. Out of the cold white snow rose the leafless forest dark and spectral; and the wind swept in fierce gusts down the valley, or sighed and moaned around the thatched roofs of the huts. From the huts themselves came few signs of life, but the smoke that swayed to and fro over the chimneys at the will of the blast, and the shivering sentinels at the officers' doors, and now and then, as you passed along, a half-naked soldier peering from a door, and muttering, in an ominous

¹ I am compelled to rely somewhat upon family tradition for this sketch of my grandmother; but the tradition is uniform. The anecdote in Mrs. Ellet's *Women of the Revolution*, of the "young lady who was resolved not to like her," has recently been confirmed to me by the lady herself.

— Mrs. Ellet's *Women of the Revolution*, Vol. I. p. 72.

² Lafayette's letter to his wife, *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 143: "L'armée Américaine passera l'hiver sous de petites baraques qui ne sont guère plus gaies qu'un cachot."

undertone, "No bread, no soldier."¹ If you ventured within, hungry nakedness met you on the threshold, or a foul and diseased air repelled you from it. In the streets you would meet parties of soldiers yoked together to little carriages of their own contriving, and dragging their wood and provisions from the storehouse to their huts.² There were regular parades, too, at guard mounting; and sometimes grand parades, in which you would see men half naked holding their rusty firelocks with hands stiffened with cold, and officers shielding themselves from the cold in a kind of dressing-gown made out of an old blanket or faded bed-quilt.³

There were many things to talk about in this dreary camp. There were rumors again of a French war. Burgoyne's defeat, perhaps, might turn the trembling scale of European diplomacy, and then how easy it would be to put an end to the war with England. There was that never-failing subject of discussion, the currency also,—long since rapidly depreciating, and now hanging apparently upon the brink of bankruptcy. The Congress have at last agreed upon Articles of Confederation; will the States adopt them, and submit to a uniform system of taxation as the only sure basis of national credit? The Congress committee was in camp, seeing with their own eyes what the army suffered; would they have the courage to fol-

¹ Duponceau's *Reminiscences*, *ut sup.* to President of Congress, February 12, 1778. Reed, Vol. I. p. 362.

² Letter of Committee of Congress

³ Kapp's *Steuben*, p. 118.

low up the evil to its source and heal it? Congress was discussing the question of half-pay; did they, did the country even, see it in its true light?

"I observe," writes Greene to one of his brothers, "you think the spirit of patriotism is ready to expire in the army among the officers from their demand to be put upon half-pay. Can you think the obligation rests upon those that first engaged, to go through the dispute without any further provision than a bare subsistence for the time being?

"If the dispute was just and necessary, then the obligation rests upon all equally; but if not, then there is no obligation to support it. These being the simple and natural principles upon which the question stands, take into consideration the situation of the officers, and how far their demands is founded in justice. The officers of the army, at the beginning of the dispute, flew to arms, regardless of their families or their fortunes, expecting at the same time that peace and reconciliation would soon take place. Few expected the dispute would be carried to such extremity; but the contest has been growing warmer and warmer from first to last, (so) that there never has been the most distant opportunity to bring about a reconciliation. If it is necessary to maintain our camp, if our present safety and future happiness depend upon its support, it is the duty and interest of every individual to lend his aid; then it becomes a common obligation upon all. Why, therefore, should a few zealous officers be made a certain sacrifice for the common good. Those that are in the army are wasting their fortunes, impairing their constitutions, depriving themselves of every domestic pleasure; and if they continue a few years longer in their present situation, what is to become

of them after the war? Out of business, out of credit, without connection in the way of trade,—military distinction or character to maintain, numerous acquaintances contracted, without the means to be civil to them hereafter, must render the condition of the officers infinitely more wretched than other parts of society. Is it reasonable, that men should be exposed to all the hardships of war, be constantly exposed to sudden death and broken bones, without any compensation? Is this making the business of society equal? There never was a nation under the sun, where a set of officers were left without support after a long and cruel war, unless it was when all the inhabitants did equal duty in the civil and military departments. But, waiving the justice of their claim, good policy demands the measure, for the continent cannot support the war upon the present system."

This year, too, there was a new army to raise. Rhode Island had undertaken, at the suggestion of General Varnum, to enlist a negro battalion.

"The Rhode Island troops," Greene writes to his brother, "have done themselves great honor; the reputation of the officers is in high estimation. The soldiers of the two regiments are put into one; and Colonel Greene and all his officers are coming home to recruit a negro regiment. Will they succeed or not?"

They did succeed; and among my earliest recollections of the soldiers of the Revolution is old Ichabod¹ who lived to enjoy in the midst of two new generations, the honor he had won by the side of their fathers. We may readily suppose that there was no little speculation and conjecture in camp about these new soldiers.

¹ See Bartlett's Rhode Island Colonial Records, Vol. VIII. pp. 524, 641, 358, 359.

But whatever the numerical strength of the army might be, they were to have at least the strength of discipline. On the 23d of February Baron Steuben reached Valley Forge. It was an exciting day in the American camp. When his approach was known, Washington rode out several miles to meet him ; and on reaching the quarters that had been assigned him, he found an officer with twenty-five men stationed at the door as a guard of honor. "I am only a volunteer," said Steuben, and sought to decline the compliment. "Our whole army," answered Washington, "would be gratified to stand sentinel for such volunteers."¹ I have already given a glimpse of the old soldier in Mrs. Greene's evening circle ; but that which chiefly made him welcome there, was the good sense and good spirit with which he used his profound science as a tactician. "Give me a plan of inspection," said Washington ; and Frederick's old soldier, putting off the pride of professional knowledge, set himself down to study the materials he was to work with, and adapt his plan to his means. "I was often obliged," says he, "to abandon ideas I had formed. I was in want of information and advice, and I was fortunate enough to find a few officers of merit, who gave me every satisfaction. They were General Greene, Colonel Laurens, and Colonel Hamilton."² Betwixt him and Greene it was the beginning of a friendship which was to hold firm till death. In a few days the plan was com-

¹ Kapp, p. 105.

² Ibid., 124.

pleted and approved. Then began the application of it, and it is easy to conceive the deep interest with which the whole army watched its progress. His first step was to draft from the line a hundred and twenty men as a guard for the Commander-in-chief and a school for himself. And now if we call to mind the English prejudice, which threw the drilling of recruits upon sergeants as a drudgery below the dignity of a commissioned officer, and remember that it had been strictly imitated by the Americans, we shall easily conceive the surprise of the American officers when they saw a major-general take a musket in his own hands and teach his men how to manage it. It is easy, too, to conceive the pride with which the men themselves went through their lesson, repeating it doubtless to their less fortunate comrades, day by day as they learned it. "In a fortnight," says Steuben, "my company knew perfectly how to bear arms, had a military air, knew how to march, to form in column, deploy, and execute some little manoeuvres with excellent precision."¹ Greene had seen the British troops manoeuvre on Boston Common, and the regiments under his immediate command had been the best disciplined regiments in the army. But here was a work begun which was to make the whole army perfect in the most intricate details of the Prussian system,—the most perfect of all. More than one watchful hour must he have passed at Steuben's side during these first days of

¹ Kapp's Steuben, p. 126.

the experiment. How successfully the work was done Monmouth will show us next June. Meanwhile it was a pleasant and useful thing to talk about in the leisure hours of camp.

A P P E N D I X.

A P P E N D I X I.

GENEALOGY OF THE GREENE FAMILY, FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF GENERAL GREENE.

JOHN GREENE, from Salisbury, in England, brought over five children,—John,² Peter,² James,² Thomas,² and Mary²; and also brought over his wife: both buried at Conemicut farm.

John Greene settled at Providence, and was an original proprietor. He came in the next company after Roger Williams. After some time he moved to Warwick, at a place called Conemicut. Having lost his first wife, he returned to England and married a second time. He was an original proprietor in Warwick, so called since.

2d. His first son, John,² Deputy Governor, married an Almy, by whom he had four sons,—Peter,³ Job,³ Samuel,³ and Richard³: and four daughters, who married Pory, John Spencer, Charles Holden, and Thomas Greene. Peter,² the second son, married and was soon after drowned, leaving no children.

James,² the third son, married Deliverance Potter, by whom he had James,³ and two daughters, Sarah³ and Mary³; both married Reynolds. His second wife was an Anthony, from Rhode Island, by whom he had Peter,³ Jabez,³ David,³ John,³ and Elizabeth³; one married a Hull, name unknown.

Thomas,² his fourth son, married a Barton, by whom he had Thomas,³ Benjamin,³ Richard,³ and Nathaniel.³

Mary² married a Sweet, who was the father of all the *bone-setting* Sweets.

John,² his son Peter,³ married an Arnold, at Pawtuxet, by whom he had Peter,⁴ John,⁴ William,⁴ Stephen,⁴ Elisha,⁴ and Barlow⁴; also one daughter, who married Stephen Arnold at Warwick.

Job,³ second son to John,² married a Sayles, by whom he had Job,⁴ Christopher,⁴ Daniel,⁴ Philip,⁴ Amy,⁴ Mary,⁴ Phœbe,⁴ Catharine,⁴ and Deborah.⁴

Samuel,³ third son of John,² married a Gorton, by whom he had Mary,⁴ who married Thomas Fry; William,⁴ the Governor; Samuel,⁴ and Benjamin.⁴

Richard,³ fourth son of John,² married a Sayles, by whom he had one son, named John, who married an Almy; also five daughters, — Andrey,⁴ Almy,⁴ Isobel,⁴ Eleanor,⁴ and Mary.⁴

James,³ son of James,² married Mary Fones, by whom he had ten children, — Fones,⁴ James,⁴ Daniel,⁴ Elisha,⁴ John,⁴ Jeremiah,⁴ and Samuel⁴; Marcy, Deliverance, and Mary, one of whom married John Holden, the other Resolved Rhodes.

Peter,³ son of James,² married a Slocum, who was afterwards drowned at Pawtuxet Falls; left several children.

Jabez,³ son of James,² married a Barton, by whom he had one daughter, named Susannah, married to a Chadsey; and six sons, — James,⁴ Jabez,⁴ Nathaniel,⁴ Benjamin,⁴ Rufus,⁴ and John⁴; Jabez married for his second wife Hannah Whitman, by whom he had one daughter.

David,³ son of James,² married a Slocum, by whom he had one son, — David.⁴ David³ married a Barber for his second wife, by whom he had two sons, — Jonathan and Joseph; and several daughters.

John,³ son of James,² married an Allen, of Dartmouth, by whom he had David,⁴ James,⁴ Increase,⁴ and Job⁴; and several daughters.

Thomas,³ son of Thomas,² married Anna Greene, daughter of Deputy John Greene, by whom he had one son, named John, who lived at Potowomut; and also several daughters.

Benjamin,³ son of Thomas,² married Susannah Holden, by whom he had one son, Benjamin,⁴ who married an Arnold, leaving one daughter named Phœbe⁵; Susannah, who married Philip Arnold; Catharine, William Greene, afterwards Governor; Elizabeth, John Fry; Margaret, Pardon Tillinghast.

Richard,³ son of Thomas,² married a Carder, by whom he had Richard,⁴ who lived in Warwick; Thomas, in Bristol; and three daughters, — Mary,⁴ married Elisha Greene; Elizabeth,⁴ an Allen, of Rhode Island; and Welthan,⁴ Jeremiah Lippitt.

Nathaniel,³ son of Thomas, married a Gould, of Boston; lived and died there, leaving Thomas,⁴ Nathaniel,⁴ Rufus,⁴ Benjamin,⁴ and William.⁴

Nathaniel⁴ Greene, son of Jabez,³ married Phœbe Greene, and had issue, — Benjamin,⁵ who was born seventh day of the fifth month, about eleven o'clock in the morning, on the first day of the week, 1734; Thomas,⁵ was born the eleventh day of the ninth month, about five o'clock in the morning, 1735. My wife Phœbe⁵ died the eleventh day of third month, about two o'clock in the afternoon, 1737. I was married to Mary Mott the eighteenth day of second month, 1739. Our son Jacob⁵ was born the seventh day of the first month, 1740, about one or two o'clock in the morning, on the sixth day of the week. Our daughter Phœbe⁵ was born the twentieth day of the first month, 1741, about four o'clock in the morning. Our daughter Phœbe died [*blank in original*] day of eighth month, 1741. Our son NATHANAEL⁵ was born the twenty-seventh day of fifth month, 1742, about one or two o'clock in the afternoon of the third day of the week. Our son William⁵ was born the first day of the ninth month, 1743, between four and five o'clock in the morning, on the third day of the week. Our son Elihue⁵ was born the tenth day of the tenth month, 1746, between one and two o'clock in the morning of the fourth day of the week. Our son Christopher⁵ was born the third day of fifth month, 1748, about one or two o'clock in the morning, on the first day of the week. Our son Perry⁵ was born the fifth day of the ninth month, 1749, about five o'clock in the morning, on the first day of the week. My wife Mary died the seventh day of third month, 1753, *new style*, about seven or eight o'clock in the morning, on the fourth day of the week.

This is the last entry in this table. The Genealogy of the family has been written in full by General George Sears Greene, to whose work I refer in advance all those who are interested in these details. I give here the only addition that my own subject requires.

Nathanael,⁵ son of Nathanael,⁴ married Catharine Littlefield, and had issue, — George Washington, Martha Washington, Cornelia Lott, Nathanael Ray, Louisa Catharine, and a daughter who died a few days after her birth.

George W. was drowned in Savannah River. He was never married. Martha W. and Cornelia L. were twice married, and left families. Louisa C. was married, but had no children. Nathanael Ray married Anna Maria Clarke and had issue,— Nathanael and George Washington.

In the Potowomut branch the order of descent from the original emigrant is,— 1. John, the founder. 2. James. 3. Jabez. 4. Nathanael, the Quaker preacher. 5. Nathanael, the General.

GENEALOGY OF THE COWENT (WARWICK) BRANCH OF THE
GREENE FAMILY IN RHODE ISLAND.

1. John Greene, sen.,² the founder of the family in New England.
2. John Greene, jün., born in 1619 or 1620. Deputy Governor of the Colony from 1690 to 1700. Died 27th Nov., 1708.
3. Samuel, son of John, jun.,² born 1670, died 1720.
4. William, son of Samuel, born 16th May, 1696. Lieut.-Governor and Governor of the Colony for thirteen of the seventeen years between 1741 and 1758, in which latter year he died in office.
5. William, son of William, born Aug. 16, 1731. Chief Justice of the State of R. I. in 1777, and Governor from 1778 to 1785. Died Nov. 29, 1809.
6. Ray Greene, son of the second William, born Feb. 2, 1765, Attorney-General and District Attorney for several years till 1797, when he was elected Senator in Congress, which office he resigned in 1801. Died 11th Jan., 1849.
7. William, son of Ray, at present (1867) Lieut.-Governor of Rhode Island.

A P P E N D I X II.

See page 344.

The following letter is still more important as an illustration of the relations of Greene to Washington. I am indebted for a copy of it to Mr. M. H. Welles, of Big Flats, N. Y.

LETTER OF GENERAL WASHINGTON TO JAMES WILSON, Esq., IN CONGRESS, PHILADELPHIA.

HEAD QUARTERS, MORRIS TOWN, 15th March, 1777.

DEAR SIR, —

Give me leave to introduce to your attention Major-General Greene, who obliges me by delivering this. He is a gentleman in whose abilities I place the most entire confidence. A long acquaintance with him justifies me in this. . . . The danger of communicating by letter, our present situation, and the indispensable necessity of Congress knowing it, have compelled me, though I can ill spare so useful an officer at this time, to send him to Philadelphia. . . . His perfect knowledge of our strength and of my opinion enables him to give Congress the most satisfactory accounts they can desire.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most humble servant,

GEO. WASHINGTON.

END OF VOL. I.

Works by the Same Author.

HISTORICAL STUDIES. 1 vol. 12mo. G. P. PUTNAM. 1850.

BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES. 1 vol. 12mo. G. P. PUTNAM. 1860.

HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. 1 vol. 12mo. TICKNOR AND FIELDS. 1864.

NATHANAEL GREENE: AN EXAMINATION OF SOME PASSAGES IN MR. BANCROFT'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. 8vo. TICKNOR AND FIELDS. 1866.

